

Teacher Intra-district Migration out of Title 1 Schools:
Case Study of a Midwestern Suburban School District

By

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Abstract

Teacher migration studies show that teachers frequently transfer out of schools serving poorer, lower achieving, more diverse student populations leading some researchers to believe that teachers are dissatisfied working with poor, low achieving, and minority students. This study presents a more comprehensive evidence-based perspective that aligns with organizational theory suggesting that teachers are not leaving because of the students, they are leaving because of the working conditions and organizational structures that are failing the students. For this study, I interviewed twelve teachers who migrated out of Title 1 schools and transferred into non-Title 1 schools within the same suburban school district. The school district has been recognized on multiple occasions for its high-quality organizational and educational functioning, yet its teacher turnover rates mirror national averages and the high poverty schools consist on average of one-third more turnover and continues to increase. This study reveals teachers' perspectives based on their lived experiences of advantages and disadvantages of teaching in Title 1 buildings compared to teaching in non-Title 1 buildings within the same award winning suburban school district. Workload and its related stress, instructional focus, scheduling autonomy, parental involvement, working conditions, and student behavior were commonly described differences between teacher experiences in Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools. Teachers were asked to provide a ranked order of reasons why they left the Title 1 schools within the district and identified overwhelming student need and stress, lack of leadership, student behavior, and scheduling pull-out programs to be their top reasons for leaving their Title 1 building. Teachers also identified factors that held the potential to retain them in their Title 1 schools. Thus, this study contributes to the overall understanding of teacher turnover and specifically articulates through the voices of teachers who chose to migrate, their perceptions of

differences, challenges, and benefits to teaching in Title 1 and non-Title 1 school settings within the same school district. Ultimately, this study sought to identify working conditions and organizational structures that teachers prefer that might best predict their satisfaction and retention. This study concludes with recommendations for those who seek to stabilize the staffing in these schools.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Despite a fundamental need for qualified and competent teachers, public schools are facing a well-documented epidemic of teacher turnover in the United States that has increased substantially over the past thirty years (Ingersoll & Merrill, 2012). In 2003, The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) reported that approximately one third of America's new teachers leave teaching during the first three years, and almost half leave during their first five years (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). In an effort to combat the epidemic of teacher turnover, research has sought to identify why teachers are leaving schools at such a high rate. Findings reveal that turnover rates are as much as 50 percent higher in schools with poor, minority, and low-achieving students compared to schools serving affluent and higher-achieving populations (Ingersoll, 2001; Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2007). Elementary schools where 50 percent or more of their student populations receive free and reduced lunch are designated as being eligible for Title I funding (Retrieved on February 26, 2018 from www.ksde.org). Title 1 schools receive additional federal funds as authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and these schools frequently are labeled *high poverty schools*. Teacher turnover is a widespread issue in the United States; however, Title 1 buildings with greater percentages of poverty and low achieving students face higher percentages of teacher turnover creating complex and dire disparities in public education (Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, 2001; NCTAF, 2003). Nationwide, high poverty schools more frequently employ less experienced teachers with weaker educational background and limited academic skills (Hanushek et al., 2004; Ingersoll,

2001; Prince, 2002; Sanders & Rivers, 1996). Many schools serving America's neediest children lose over half of their teaching staff every five years (Allensworth et al., 2009; Hemphill & Nauer, 2009). Research suggests that low-income students are especially dependent upon their teachers (Downey, Hughes, & Von Hippel, 2008). This situation produces inferior learning opportunities and perpetuates damaging inequalities that widen the achievement gap between the haves and have-nots in the U.S. population (Allensworth et al., 2009).

The disparity of teacher shortages mostly have been studied in particular places, such as high poverty urban and rural communities (Hirsh, 2005). While the issue of teacher turnover is often exclusively associated with run down, inner city schools or small, isolated rural towns; more recent research has presented turnover as problematic for high poverty schools regardless of their geographical location (Boyd et al., 2005; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner, 2007). In fact, many large suburban districts in our country contain high poverty schools that suffer high turnover rates (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011). However, not much research has been done as a way of understanding the complexities of turnover within suburban districts.

This study is designed to better understand Title 1 teacher turnover within suburban America that frequently has been generalized to only exist in urban areas; it examines the phenomenon of teacher turnover from high minority, low achieving student populations even within a highly recognized, awarded suburban school district. The location for this study, Kansas City Metropolitan area, is unique in that the school district's attendance area encompasses highly affluent neighborhoods literally blocks away from government assisted low-income housing. This fosters large economic disparity within the district as a whole, and also between schools within the same district. This disparity creates complexities and challenges that

the Suburban Public Schools (SPS) [pseudonym] administration must combat for the success of their organization as a whole. The situation also perpetuates an interesting dynamic where teachers have the opportunity to teach in a high poverty school located within an award-winning school district that has ample resources, supports, and programming. Teachers can also live in a wealthy, low crime community with a low commute time while working in a Title 1 school.

Suburban Public School's accolades consist of small class sizes (average 20.5 students per teacher), a supportive community, and award-winning neighborhoods. Typically, this does not present a picture of a school district with high percentages of teacher turnover. However, teacher turnover has increased 7.1 percent within the district over the past five years. Interestingly, when SPS turnover rates are broken down, the district mirrors national averages; and migration between buildings within the same district accounts for over 50 percent of the SPS turnover. What would cause teachers to transfer between buildings but remain in the same district?

A present gap in the literature regarding teacher turnover reveals a misguided focus on attrition, or the group of teachers who leave the profession. Attrition has been thought to be more significant in the literature because it signifies a loss in workforce and therefore has been presumed to be more detrimental. Studies have often ignored and de-emphasized the other half of the story: teacher migration. Approximately 60 percent of turnover results from teachers who stay in the profession but transfer between schools and jobs (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Lankford et al., report that large scale quantitative studies have informed research regarding attrition, yet regarding those who migrate between buildings, "We know very little about [teacher] sorting or the causal relationships that lead to sorting" (2002, p. 39). The population of teachers who stay in the profession, but migrate between schools and districts, are

significant, rarely tracked, and are disturbing the function of schools as organizations in the same manner as those who leave altogether. However, the impact has not been studied. Future research focused on migration can provide insights and clarify teacher preferences, motivations, and decision-making processes. This type of research could present a richer analysis and description of teacher turnover and motivating factors reporting on the whole picture of teacher turnover rather than just part of it.

This study focuses on the understudied population of teachers who migrate within a single school district, a significant component of teacher turnover that has gone unexamined. I interviewed teachers who migrated away from Title 1 schools within the district to discern why they moved and what more might have been done to retain them in their previous Title 1 schools. Ultimately, this study seeks to inform policy makers and school administrators how they might address the effects of increased turnover in the neediest, highest poverty schools within a largely affluent and highly regarded district.

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What do teachers perceive to be similarities and differences between Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools?
2. How do teachers who transfer out of Title 1 and into non-Title 1 schools within the same district describe their motivations for transferring?
3. How do teachers describe incentives or motivations that might encourage them to remain in their original Title 1 school?

Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

This literature review is organized around four sections to provide a framework for understanding a component of teacher turnover: migration. The first section defines teacher turnover and disaggregates the two primary components of teacher turnover: attrition and migration. A present gap in literature is acknowledged, which highlights and focuses attention towards migration. Within this section, types of migration are differentiated and those who migrate are identified as significant, unique, and often overlooked. Finally, this section reviews present research on why teachers migrate.

The second section of this literature review explores the many ways teacher turnover is problematic. It describes how teacher turnover negatively impacts the success of schools, the function of schools as organizations, and the financial drain it places on the business of education. In addition, this section describes how teacher turnover creates disparities among the U.S. public educational system. The third section provides a brief overview of literature regarding characteristics of teachers who are most likely to leave their jobs, which jobs they are most likely to leave, which student populations they are most likely to leave, and the school conditions teachers prefer. Teachers' perceptions of their ability to be successful is analyzed regarding factors of teacher accountability within high-stakes testing and work conditions that prevent or support their perception of their ability to make a difference.

The fourth and final section of the literature review provides background on Suburban Public Schools (SPS) by outlining district demographics, awards, and Title 1 programming. This section also gives definitions of key terms.

Defining Turnover

Teacher turnover refers to the departure of teachers from their position and that position being filled with a new teacher. Turnover can be broken down into two parts: *attrition*, those that leave the teaching profession altogether; and *migration*, those who continue to teach but leave their current teaching position for another teaching position.

Types of migration. There are additional under-identified complexities within the components of teacher migration that need to be defined and sorted out. Teachers can be asked to transfer due to a district need in a particular teaching assignment (involuntary transfer). Teachers can request a move (voluntary transfer) to another building within district (*intra-district migration*) or transfer out of the district all together (*inter-district migration*) into another teaching job. The distinction between these two forms of voluntary migration: intra-district and inter- district migration has not been acknowledged in literature or studied. Instead, the broad term *movers* has been used to describe all teachers who migrate into other teaching jobs (Ingersoll, 2001). This broad term is used regardless as to where teachers move or whether they voluntarily move or are asked to move. These distinctions are significant when sorting out the reasons why teachers leave.

Migrators are unique. Investigating migration is significant because this group of teachers do not want to leave the profession and are not retiring, therefore; they are a group of professionals that can still be influenced and are a vital resource. They have already been trained, have experience as teachers, and through their migration patterns are inevitably impacting the function of the school districts. They are also unique in that they might need supports in their new position regarding professional development, but they are not new teachers. The professional development and mentoring that teachers who migrate might need could look

very different from brand new teachers. Districts do not often offer supports specialized to the population of teachers who migrate. This creates a unique situation that has not been studied, and could present a gap in professional learning and development for this particular group of teachers. Depending on whether teachers migrate to different school districts or stay within the same school district also presents complexities that professional learning and development does not differentiate.

Why migrate. The sparse research that is available on the population of teachers who migrate has reported the following four primary reasons as the cause for the migration: they were asked to leave, because of family or personal reasons that require a geographical change in location, dissatisfaction with the district, and or to pursue another job that is not available within their present school (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). It is substantial to note that the teacher responses for migration are similar to the reasons teachers' leave the profession all together, and not a lot is understood about how the decision making process is different in those that chose to migrate and those who chose to leave the profession, or what the blanket statement "dissatisfaction" refers to in a more specific context. Therefore, more research is needed to comprehend reasons for why teachers change teaching jobs and buildings, but do not leave the profession.

Turnover is Problematic

It is widely believed that one of the pivotal causes of inferior school performance is the inability of schools to adequately staff classrooms with qualified teachers due to the "revolving door" of teachers entering and then promptly exiting the profession. The revolution and disappearance of schools' most important resource, its teachers, has serious and far reaching implications. Losing high numbers of newly trained teachers early in their career creates instability and negatively impacts the success of schools. School districts are forced to hire

novice teachers more frequently, which increases the pool of inexperienced teachers in the building, and inhibits the school's ability to train and develop effective teachers over time. Students then suffer the consequence of having more inexperienced, less effective teachers (Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, & Wheeler, 2007; Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2007). In addition, patterns of chronic turnover also impact the ability of a district to successfully function as an organization by disrupting the quality of the commitment, continuity, and cohesion among its teacher workforce, whereas; teachers' work involves extensive interaction and collaboration (Ingersoll, 2001). Disruptions in the relationships of teachers working around a common goal results in "less comprehensive and unified instructional programs" (Guin, 2004, p. 19) which directly and negatively affect student learning (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Ronfeldt et al., 2013). High turnover is also costly to school districts also in terms of manpower, resources, and the financial drain of continuously recruiting, hiring, and training new hires. The National Commission on Teaching & America's Future estimates that 7.34 billion dollars are spend each year replacing teachers in the United States (Barnes, Crowe, & Schaefer, 2007). More specifically, the NCTAF reports that on average each urban school spends \$70,000 annually on costs associated with teacher turnover while non-urban schools spend \$33,000 each year.

Why Teachers Leave

Empirical research on teacher turnover focuses on one component of teacher turnover: *teacher attrition*, or those that leave the field of teaching altogether. Initially research focuses on teacher characteristics, identifying which types of teachers are most likely to leave the profession. The risk of attrition is highest the first few years in the classroom (Murnane et al., 1991). Mid-career entrants, men, or alternatively prepared individuals with alternative

certification programs are most likely to leave (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Several studies have found a significant correlation between those who leave and higher SAT scores, college grade point averages, and job performance evaluations; revealing the “best and brightest” are among those who are most likely to exit (Murnane et al., 1991; Henke, Chin, & Geis, 2006). After differentiating characteristics of who is most likely to exit, research then focuses on which fields of teaching were taking the greatest hit. Chronic teacher shortages are more profound in particular fields such as mathematics, science and special education.

Many researchers have linked individual teacher mobility to student demographics (Boyd et al., 2005; Carroll et al., 2000; Hanushek et. al., 2004; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner 2007). Hanushek and colleagues (2004) found that teacher attrition and movement patterns were much more strongly related to student race and achievement than to salary differentials. More specifically, “Teachers systemically favor higher achieving, non-minority, non-low income students” (Hanushek et al, 2004, p. 12). Repeated subsequent studies support the idea that teachers’ career decisions are driven by their own preferences for students who are higher achieving, less diverse, and wealthier (Boyd et al, 2005; Carroll et al., 2000; Scafidi et al., 2007). After differentiating the type of teachers who leave, the fields they leave most often, and the identification of student groups that teachers are most likely to abandon, research then presents the work conditions most associated with teacher turnover.

Work conditions. Richard Ingersoll was the first to use organizational theory to reframe the issue of teacher turnover, and instead of supporting the idea that teachers are leaving particular students, he found fault with the schools teachers were leaving. He found that organizational factors of the school work conditions were associated with higher rates of turnover, even when school location, school level, and demographic characteristics of teachers

and students were controlled. A substantial body of literature has followed Ingersoll's work and supported the claim that teachers are avoiding hard-to-staff schools because of the working conditions that highly correlate with student body characteristics, not solely because of the student characteristics themselves (Allensworth et al., 2009; Horgn, 2005). Research suggests that low-income, non-white, low-achieving students disproportionately attend schools with less desirable working conditions such as poor facilities, fewer resources and materials, lower teacher salaries, and fewer opportunities for teachers to participate in school-wide decision making (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 2003; Hirsch & Emerick, 2007; Oakes et. al., 2002; Schneider, 2004; Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2003). Therefore, teachers are leaving these schools due to their "scandalous working conditions" and not because of the students who are entangled within these settings (Johnson, & Birkeland, 2003, p. 40).

Teacher accountability. A decade of research has supported using an organizational perspective to frame teacher turnover, and that perspective has provided that working conditions are high predictors of turnover. Above all, teachers report that the single most influential factor in whether they stay or leave is based on their personal belief as to whether they can be successful. This belief is enchain in whether their work environment provides conditions that support or hinder their ability to succeed. Complicating matters further is the societal demand for accountability in public education. Throughout the past decade, high stakes standardized testing has increased, along with the acceptance of tying teacher salaries and appraisal processes to student test scores. This focus has exacerbated the workload and stress of teachers and greatly altered their perception of success and failure. Fueled by these additional challenges and complexities, school administrators and policy makers seek to identify favorable work conditions that can retain teacher populations in spite of growing accountability. Identifying work

conditions that could support and retain teachers has become more and more significant, while clear cut preferences do not exist in research, but are on-going

Stress. Teachers work in a stressful environment. They work predominately in isolation with many responsibilities and have high expectations in spite of various inhibiting factors that are out of their control. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress is the most widely accepted and commonly cited theory in stress literature. The transactional model of stress states that stress does not result from the demands expected from the person, but it is related to the fact that the person evaluates whether they have the resources to meet those demands (Hobfoll, Schwarzer, & Chon, 1998). Perceptions that demands outweigh available resources for coping lead to the stress response, which includes negative emotions, and over long periods of time, fosters burnout and health problems. Burnout is a contributing factor leading to high attrition and high rates of turnover in school staffing (Sanford, 2017). Burnout happens when teachers are over-committed and over-dedicated to work that is psychologically taxing for too long (Freudenberger, 1974).

The History of Title 1 Pull-Out Programs

Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was enacted as part of President Lyndon B. Johnson's War on Poverty over fifty years ago. Still today, ESEA and Title 1 aims to increase funding for disadvantaged children in an effort to reduce the achievement gap in the United States. In 2002, the federal government issued the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) which expanded funding for Title 1 programs, but also mandated new testing, reporting, and accountability requirements. These accountability measures heightened the need of Title 1 programming to demonstrate increased student performance, and also differentiated out how Title 1 funds must be used. Three fiscal requirements were enacted by the federal

government in an effort to ensure state and local Title 1 funds were being used to purchase things for the targeted, low achieving students. The most confusing and influential of the three rules was the supplement requirement. Smith describes how schools responded to the supplement fiscal requirement by summarizing:

The dominant choice to create a ‘clean’ fiscal trail was to create, in effect, a separate system within the school. Their goals were to keep the Title 1 teachers as separate as possible from the core program of the school, deliver Title 1 services in separate settings, and have separate technical assistance and reporting lines. (1986, 11-82)

According to Gordon and Reber (2015), the burden of separating out and documenting Title 1 fund usage for fiscal compliance “put pressure on districts to find standalone activities to fund Title 1, thus creating the “pull-out” system where students are pulled out of regular classroom to receive Title 1 services”(p. 133). Pull-out programs such as Title 1 Reading and Title 1 Math have been recognized to yield unintended negative consequences. Teachers report the following unintended consequences of the programs and negative effects: limited teacher autonomy or flexibility over scheduling which then segments and chunks instruction for the entire class, segmenting instruction into unrelated or disjointed concepts for the students the pull-outs target and support, and stigmatizing students who are taken away from the general education setting.

The government acknowledged the negative impact their fiscal regulations were having on students and schools and therefore modified the governing fiscal regulations by then allowing for a schoolwide (SWP) option for Title 1 schools. The modifications are significantly more flexible and allow for schools to use the funds in a way that benefit the whole school, thus allowing for flexibility and options within the model and structure of the pull-outs. However, the

complexity and confusion surrounding the policy modification and additional compliance requirements has caused a majority of schools to not take up the SWP option.

Suburban Public Schools Background

The socio-economic diversity within the district is of note; eleven of the thirty-five elementary schools within the district are Title 1 schools that report over 75 percent and as much as 89 percent of their student populations qualify for free and reduced lunch. The socio-economic diversity within the district creates an extraordinary situation where pockets of poverty are present in low-income government subsidized apartments within a majority affluent community, which creates vast differences in the poverty levels of its schools. The unusual dichotomy is exemplified at the elementary level where there are a handful of schools with more than 75 percent of its student population receiving free and reduced lunch, and a relatively equal number of schools with less than 5 percent receiving free and reduced lunch.

The selected district is one of the largest school district in the Kansas City metropolitan area and state: consisting of 35 elementary schools, nine middle schools, and five high schools along with eight specialty facilities located in one of the top 50 wealthiest counties in the United States. Suburban Public Schools has visible, streamlined legally-sound operating policies, high functioning board of education and union partnerships, a fiscally responsible and credible finance department, the community support of 13 bonds passed historically, a safe school and emergency coalition, and well respected leaders. The district has everything anyone could want in a school district. All teachers within the district are provided safe and well-kept facilities, a competitive salary scale that can be increased with continued education and professional development, standards-aligned SPS adopted curriculum, workrooms and classrooms full of resources, a district shared library full of teaching resources, state of the art classroom

technologies such as iPad stations and Smart Boards, ample professional development opportunities, time allotted plan periods, scheduled planned learning communities, clear policies and procedures outlined in student handbooks, new teacher induction programs, and appraisal evaluations.

SPS prides itself on its outstanding leadership, shared vision, high achieving students, professional development opportunities, a 98 percent highly-qualified teaching staff, and a stellar new teacher mentoring program. Suburban Public Schools was listed among America's Top 25 Places to Live and Go to School (Relocate America, 2011). It is known for quality and excellence; it has a 23.9 composite average ACT score, a 92.9 percent graduation rate, a 95.1 percent attendance rate, 17 National Blue Ribbon School Awards, a Level III (highest honor) Kansas Award for Excellence, and has experienced continuous growth since 1965. The city of Suburbia was twice ranked as one of the fastest growing cities above 100,000 by the United States Census Bureau, and was listed in Forbes magazine in 2008 as the third best county in America to raise a family for their, "terrific schools, low cost of living, reasonably priced homes and short commute times." The area is known for its newly-built suburban neighborhoods with beautiful parks, trails, libraries, churches, and schools nestled within 20 minutes of metropolitan Kansas City which provides world class restaurants, amenities, and entertainment. SPS is not only situated in a great location and community, it is a highly efficient organization.

Of particular note is that Suburban Public Schools enacted a federal mandate in the 2012-2013 school year that added student testing data as part of the teachers' yearly appraisal evaluation process. Since that mandate, teacher turnover in Title 1 schools has almost doubled. This turnover could reflect teachers who feel threatened that student test scores are linked to their

appraisal and pay; therefore, these teachers might migrate out of low performing schools and into the higher performing schools within the same district they like.

Suburban public schools targeted programs for students living in poverty. The Human Resources department within SPS has implemented a myriad of researched based programs and supports targeted at the teachers and students of their high poverty schools. This programming includes mentoring programs that are targeted at the first five years of novice teachers' careers specifically because research informs that those are the years that teachers are most likely to leave the profession. Teachers new to the district also participate in the New Teacher Induction program. SPS earned the 2007 NEA-Saturn/UAW Partnership Award for this program; which was one of only six awards presented nation-wide.

The district is similarly aware of its neediest students and has implemented resources and programming that target students who live in poverty. Even before students are school age, SPS provides research based, government funded early childhood programs such as Head Start and Jumpstart to three and four year old children with significant development delays whom come from income eligible families. This program provides education, social services, health exams, nutritious snacks and meals, mental health counseling, and special needs services. Parents as Teachers is another program that capitalizes on the critical early development of children in which teachers go into the homes of very young children in the community and provide support as well as teach the parents about developmental stages and provide practical, hands on applications to support child development. Many programs within the district have been recognized, for example; SPS's innovative Camp Kindergarten is targeted at incoming kindergarteners in Title 1 schools. The camp assesses and groups these children with appropriate supports the first several days of their public school careers. Camp Kindergarten earned the

District of Distinction recognition by District Administration magazine in 2014. SPS also received the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth Award for an Outstanding Program that provides backpacks, school supplies, clothes, haircuts, and gift cards to homeless students at the beginning of each school year, and the Gold Medal award from the Kansas State Department of Education's 2013-14 School Breakfast Challenge. SPS provides a free breakfast and lunch to students whose families qualify based on their annual income. The program also provides free lunches at Title 1 building sites during the summer months. In addition, SPS provides free summer school tuition to targeted low-achieving, low income students during the summer. Despite all of the district's success and purposeful programming, the teacher turnover rates in the district's high poverty, Title I schools have similar trends compared to those found in high poverty urban, inner city settings.

Suburban public schools title 1 programming. In Suburban Public Schools, pull-out programming is unique to Title 1 schools and provides the following pull-out instructional supports: Title 1 Reading, Title 1 Math, Speech, Special Education, and English Language Learning. Title 1 Reading and Title 1 Math are specialized programs in Title 1 schools created to pull targeted kids out of the general education classroom in order to provide them with additional instructional support in areas of need. In Suburban Public Schools, Title 1 buildings have additional teachers who have a master's degree or specialist degree in the areas of math or reading. These teachers pull out targeted groups of students who are deemed lowest achieving for thirty minutes of additional instruction each day in their area of need, math and or reading. English Language Learner (ELL) students are those students whose primary language is not English. These students are given the Kansas English Language Proficiency Assessment (KELPA) to identify their present level of English language proficiency in four domains:

listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The KELPA is then used to identify the amount of ELL services the student should receive. Students can receive up to one hour of ELL pull-outs a day.

In addition to Title 1 Reading, Title 1 Math, and ELL pull-outs, Special Education (SPED) programming is based on each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). A student's IEP dictates whether they need speech and or additional SPED services. These students will also be pulled out of the regular classroom to meet with a specialized Speech Pathologist, Physical Therapist (PT), or a SPED teacher who focuses on academic and or behavioral goals. Both of these pull-outs have specific goals outlined in the IEP that they must meet, and therefore are using the pull-out time to work towards meeting those specific goals. Students with speech pull-outs can be pulled out of the regular classroom up to thirty minutes a day, and students with the most extensive IEP's can be pulled out of the regular classroom up to an hour each day to work on academic and or behavior goals outlined in their IEP. Some students can be pulled for both speech and SPED and miss up to an hour and a half of classroom instruction each day.

Suburban Title 1 pull-outs impact on general education classrooms. During pull-out programs, classroom teachers are required by the district to not teach new content while students are pulled out of the classroom to ensure the lowest performing students are not missing essential instruction. If a student is low performing in the areas of both math and reading, that student could be pulled for Title 1 Reading and Title 1 Math which amounts to one hour of additional math and reading support each day. This equates to two hours a day (when combining Title and ELL pull out supports) that the classroom teacher is not allowed to teach additional content that pull-out students would miss. In the general education classroom this creates several scenarios.

After a whole group lesson is delivered, teachers break students into small groups during these pull-out times. This gives the students in the general education classroom time to work with what they learned, practice, or complete an assignment in a small group setting. Therefore, the students who are pulled out of the classroom are not missing the delivery of the instruction, but are missing the time to practice or work on their assignment. Those students leave for a totally different lesson in a different classroom and come back maybe even an hour later with classwork that they haven't started, haven't practiced, and is due the next day.

Prior research with suburban public schools Title 1 teachers. It is important to acknowledge a previous study conducted within Suburban Public Schools that might prove useful in informing this study. In his 2012 dissertation, John Laffoon explains how the teacher group he selected, Title 1 teachers who stay in Title 1 schools, did not provide support for his intended topic of attrition. Laffoon (2012) summarizes:

This study originally set out to explore the decision making process of teachers who choose to stay in high poverty settings rather than transfer to low poverty schools. Instead it was discovered that many of the stayers participating in the study had never elected to put themselves in situations where a choice to move or stay was necessary. They stayed in their buildings driven by beliefs and values which were predominantly linked to the service of high poverty students and families. (p. 54)

As described, the teachers interviewed did not make a choice to stay in high poverty schools, rather they made a choice to not move at all. The fact that they did not move does not necessarily mean that they preferred high poverty schools over low poverty schools.

Laffoon's (2012) research reportedly found common values and beliefs that the group of highly evaluated, principal recommended, veteran Title 1 teachers he purposefully selected shared. As stated, "The teachers preferred the relationships that could be formed in high poverty settings with both students and parents, and they also preferred the importance of their role in the

lives of high poverty students” (p. 55). Interestingly, teacher preferences were shared within this study when many of the teachers interviewed have not taught in both Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools to make a comparison. Therefore, their preferences are based on perceptions and have no basis in actual teaching experience. Additionally, some of the teachers who reportedly did teach in both Title 1 and non-Title 1 school settings reported teaching in different districts which also makes comparisons less valid regarding Suburban Public Schools.

This study can be expanded on and improved by interviewing teachers within the district who have made a choice, and their choice was to move out of a Title 1 school and move into a non-Title 1 school within the same district. Interviewing the population of teachers who are migrating within the district can better inform research on the perceived differences between Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools, and help to better understand the decision making process around migration patterns within district. Ultimately, this research could be used to inform Suburban Public Schools on ways to retain teachers in Title 1 settings.

Définitions of Key Terms

In an effort to create uniformity and accuracy, the following operational definitions will be used consistently throughout this paper.

Teacher Turnover: *Teacher turnover* refers to the departure of teachers from their teaching job. Teacher turnover consists of two components: *migration* (teachers transferring between schools) and *attrition* (teachers leaving the profession entirely) (Ingersoll, 2001).

Migration: Teachers leaving their current teaching position to transfer into another teaching position and or school within the same district (internal migration) or into a completely different district (external migration).

Attrition: Teachers leaving the teaching profession entirely (Ingersoll, 2001).

Working Conditions: A school environment to include time management, facilities and resources, school leadership, personal empowerment and opportunities for professional development (Hirsh & Emerick, 2007).

Free and Reduced Lunch: Federal guidelines are used by schools, institutions, and facilities participating in the National School Lunch Program to identify if a household's annual income is low enough to qualify a student for free and or reduced lunch prices. For the purposes of the study, free and reduced lunch student percentages qualify schools for Title 1 funding and therefore, are used as a measure of poverty.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service determines each year which families are eligible for the lunch support based on family income. For example, for the 2015-2016 school year, a student from a family of four would be eligible to receive free lunch if the monthly family income was \$2,628 or less. That same student would qualify for reduced-cost meals if the family's monthly income was \$3,739 or less. (Retrieved on February 26, 2018 from www.ksde.org)

Title 1: To qualify as a Title I school in the district, a minimum of 50 percent of the school's students must qualify for free and reduced lunch support. Title I Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act is a federally-funded program which provides supplemental support to students in high-poverty schools. The purpose of Title I is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging state academic standards. (Retrieved on February 26, 2018 from www.ksde.org).

Hard to Staff School: Schools with high concentrations of low-performing, low-income students with high teacher turnover rates, as well as, relatively high percentages of teachers who are less than fully certified (Berry & Hirsh, 2005).

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of this study has been to gain insight regarding the comprehensive question, “Why are teachers migrating out of Title 1 schools into non-Title 1 schools in the same district?” While there’s an extensive breadth of research on teacher turnover, there is a lack of literature specifically related to intra-district migration in suburban schools. This represents a significant gap in the empirical literature, and a clear purpose for this study to gain a deeper level of understanding as to why teachers have migrated from high poverty schools into more affluent schools within the same district in a suburban setting. The intellectual goal of gaining insight into what is happening specifically within Suburban Public Schools regarding teacher migration patterns have been achieved through semi-structured first hand qualitative interviews.

“The idea behind qualitative research is to purposefully select participants or sites that will best help the researcher understand the problem and the research question” (Creswell, 2009, p. 185). The strategy of purposeful sampling has been utilized. Participants were selected from a small pool of teachers who have migrated out of Title 1 schools and into non-Title 1 schools within the district. The selected method of gathering information for this study was semi-structured interviews (N=12). The intellectual goal obtained through interviewing provided the framework for practical goals.

Findings have revealed how policy can be used to retain teachers in Title 1 schools. This study investigated tradeoffs teachers need in order to be satisfied and persist in their teaching positions, specifically at Title 1 schools. This study has provided information for educational

policy leaders and school district level leaders essential to decreasing teacher turnover within Title 1 schools. Ultimately, this improvement could combat the unequal distribution of inexperienced teachers within the U.S. educational system.

Location and Context

Suburban Public School District (SPS) represents a unique and ideal setting to study the phenomenon of teacher turnover in high poverty, suburban schools. Suburban Public Schools has been purposefully selected as an ideal suburban location. Turnover data was received from the Human Resources department in SPS and has been represented with graphs and analyzed. Figure 1 exemplifies that overall turnover has risen 7.1 percent in the district over a five year time span. SPS's total turnover reached 16.8 percent during the 2016-2017 school year. This turnover rate mirrors U.S. national averages according to 2012 School and Staffing Survey and 2013 Teacher Follow-up Survey (Carver-Thomas, & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Figure 1:

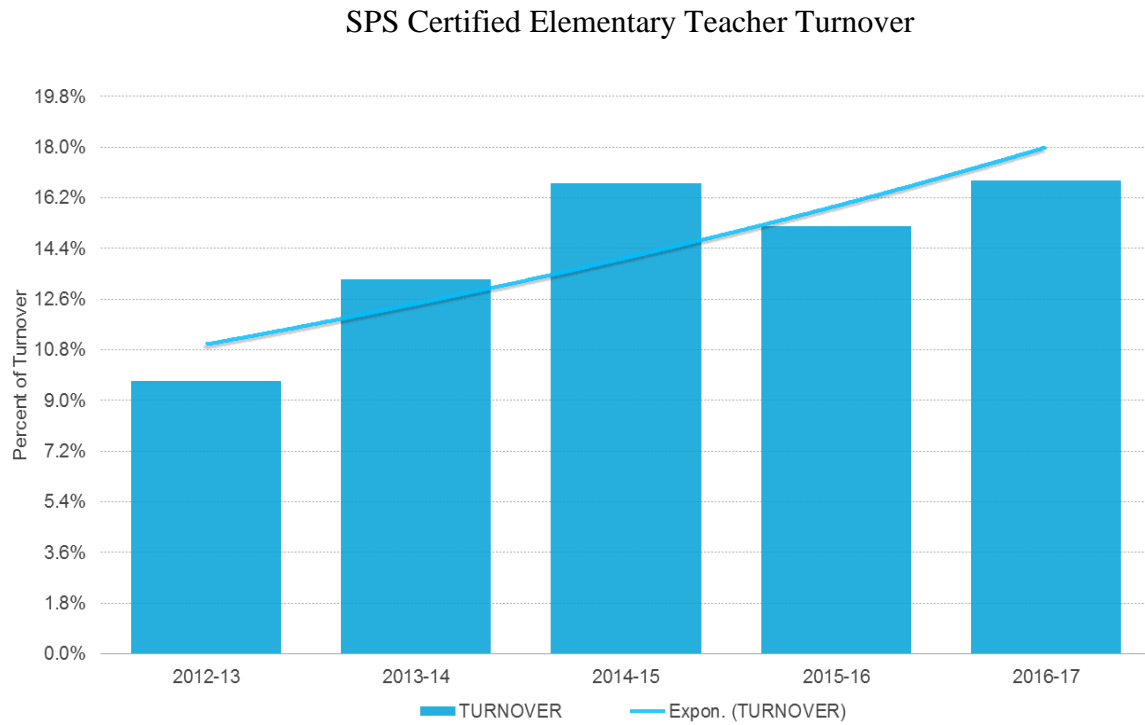
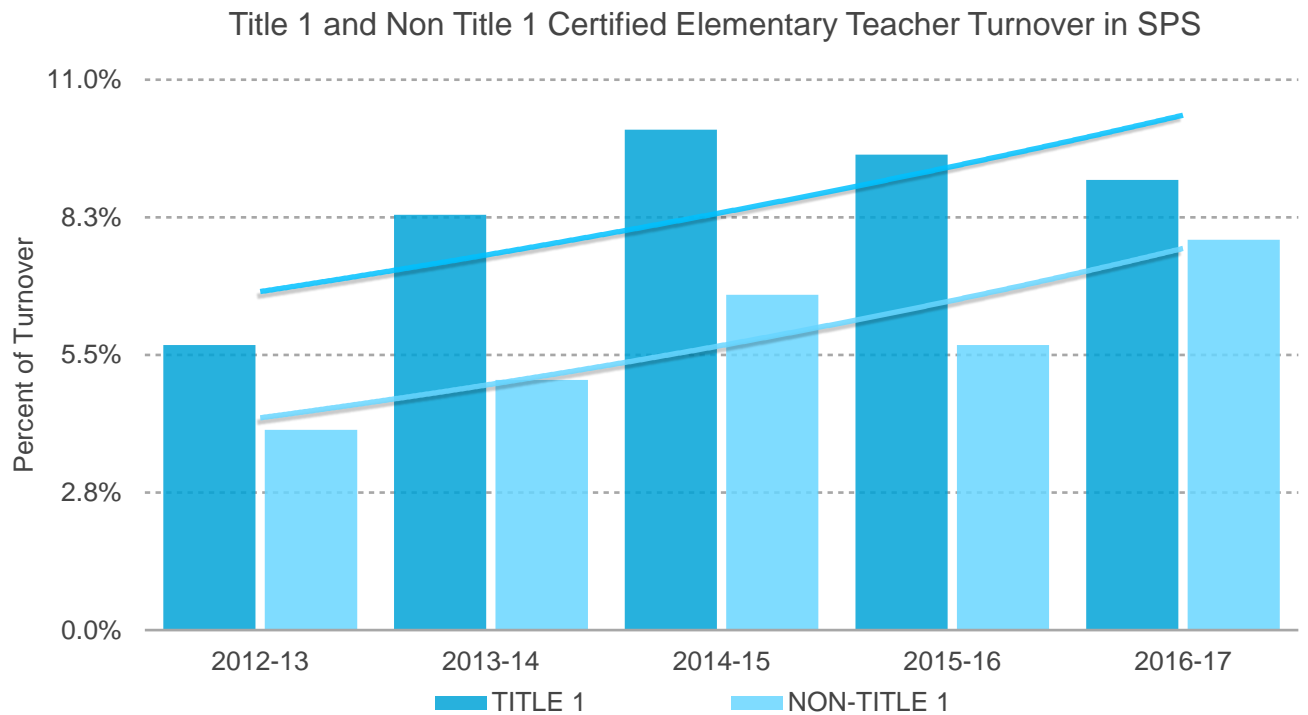


Figure 2:



When separating out the Title 1 (high poverty) elementary schools from the non-Title 1 elementary schools, Figure 2 demonstrates that Title 1 schools within the district are suffering on average one-third more teacher turnover compared to non-Title 1 (affluent) schools within the same district. This figure also reveals that both the Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools' turnover rates are trending upward equally. This means that while Title 1 schools do have greater turnover, they are not increasing their turnover at a greater rate than non-Title 1 schools. These numbers mirror national statistics that states that teachers disproportionately leave low income, low achieving schools at higher rates. Research often generalizes this occurrence to inner city, urban locations and has rarely studied this phenomenon in a suburban setting, especially between buildings within the same district.

Within Figure 3 SPS teacher turnover has been analyzed and broken down more specifically into the subcategories of attrition and migration. Breaking the turnover into migration (within district), resignations (which includes migration out of the district, leaves of absence, and attrition), and retirements can further identify that migration accounts for over half of the average turnover in SPS over the five year time span of 2012-2017. Therefore, teachers are not leaving the acclaimed district, but they are transferring into different buildings in the same district at a high rate.

Figure 3:

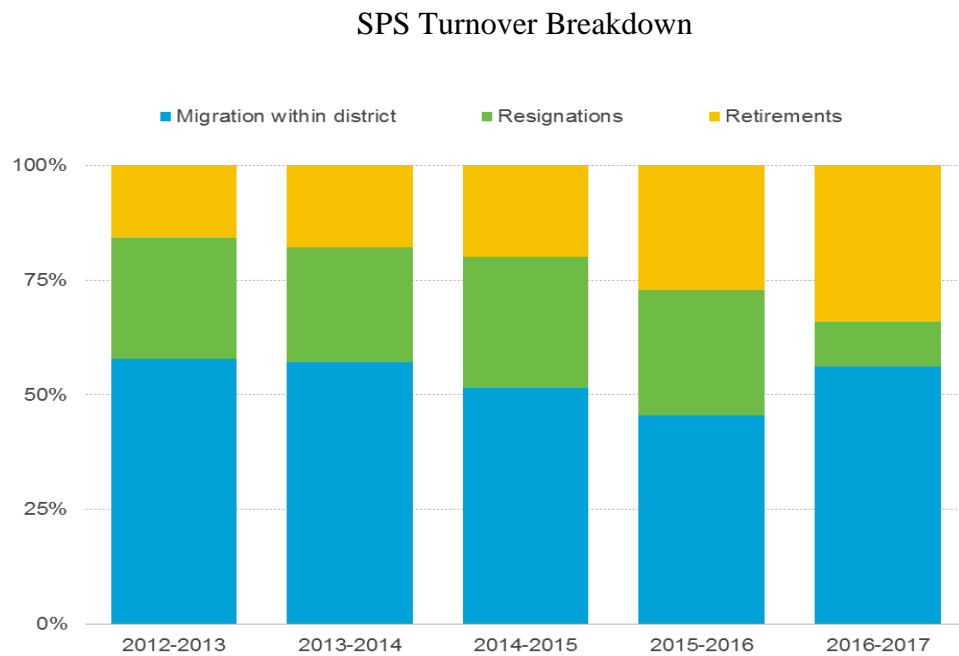


Figure 4:

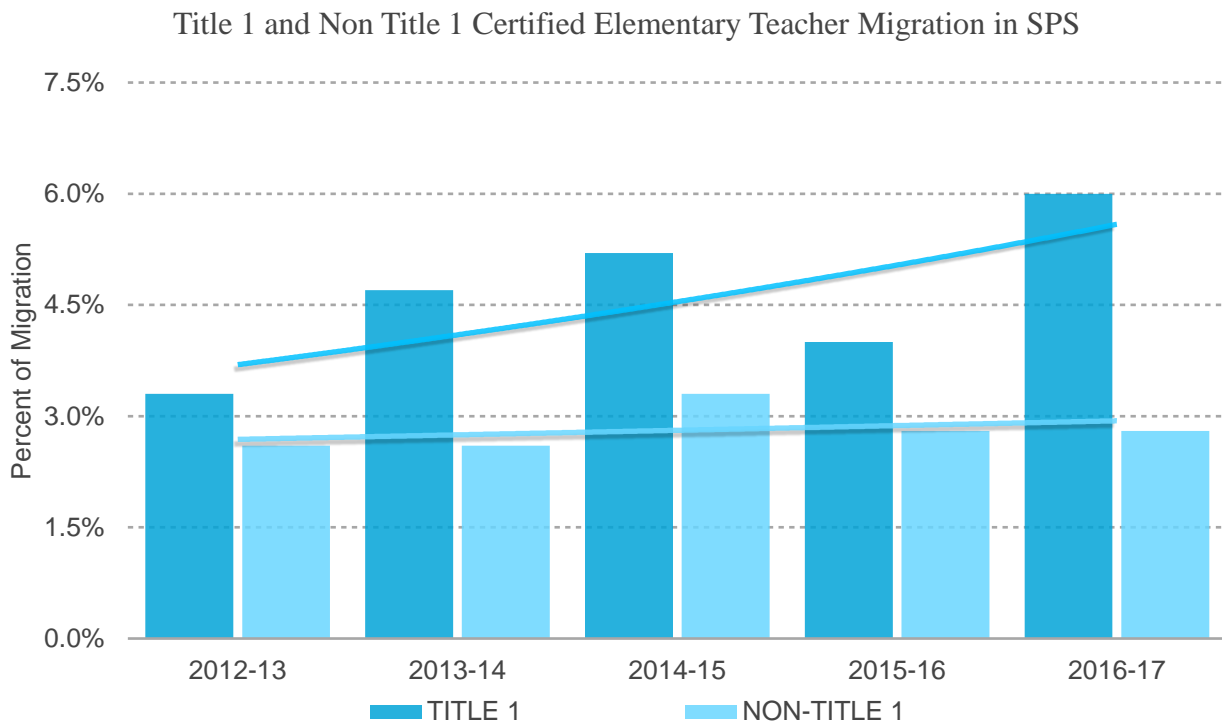


Figure 4 breaks apart turnover within the Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools in SPS by singling out specific migration patterns. This figure reveals that teachers are requesting transfers

out of Title 1 schools at an increasing rate while transfers from non-Title 1 schools into other non-Title 1 schools are relatively constant. Transfers account for over half of all of SPS turnover; therefore, understanding the decision making process of those that are increasingly transferring out of Title 1 schools is paramount for the Suburban Public Schools Human Resource Department to understand. This data is not reflective of one school, but instead a broader trend of teachers across the district requesting transfers out of Title 1 buildings, and this data does not account for the requests that were not granted by the district. Research informs us that teachers leave high poverty school due to poor work conditions rather than student populations, so then what is different about the Title 1 schools that is causing teachers to leave at higher rates compared to non-Title 1 schools in Suburban Public Schools?

Recent studies on turnover would lead one to believe that if working conditions (such as: behavioral supports, class sizes, professional development opportunities, planning time) were equitable within a school district that has high poverty as well as affluent schools, then teacher turnover within the high poverty schools would not be significantly different compared to teacher turnover within the affluent schools. However, that is not the case within Suburban Public Schools. Teachers are requesting transfers out of the Title 1 schools at an increasing rate where they are not requesting transfer out of the non-Title 1 schools at an increasing rate within the same district.

Data Collection

The researcher submitted a proposal for approval to utilize human subjects in the research to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kansas University and the proposal was approved. The researcher presented a request to Suburban Public Schools for permission to complete the study. The study was approved by the district. All email communication and

survey instruments were approved by the dissertation proposal committee and KU's Human Subjects Committee of Lawrence. Participants were selected from a database of teachers who have migrated out of Title 1 schools within the district and moved into non-Title 1 schools in the same district. Access to potential participant names and email addresses was given to the researcher after the research proposal was approved. After receiving approval from Suburban Public Schools and the IRB committee, the researcher purposefully selected and email potential participants requesting an interview. Participants were purposefully selected to best help understand the problem and answer the research questions. Merriam (2009) explains purposeful selection of interview participants, "In qualitative research, a single case or small, nonrandom, purposeful sample is selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth" (p. 224). The emails were distributed to the potential participants requesting responses within a two-week window. Seven days into the window, the researcher sent out a reminder email to all participants in order to request their participation. The goal participation totals were to confirm at least ten interviews with teachers who migrated out of Title 1 schools into non-Title 1 schools to elaborate on the experience and perceptions of migrators within the district. Data was collected from multiple sources in an attempt to triangulate data and improve validity. Merriam (2009) describes internal validity as, "The congruence between research findings and reality, and while a qualitative study can never holistically capture an objective "truth" or "reality," credibility is enhanced through efforts to triangulate information across multiple sources."

Emailing allowed the researcher to schedule the location and time of the in-person or phone interview at the participant's convenience. Participants were informed that no identities would be revealed in the dissertation, and that pseudonyms would be used and no identifiable

information that is attributable to the participants would be published in the final document.

Glesne (2006) stated, “Participants have a right to expect that when they give you permission to observe or interview, you will protect their confidences and preserve their anonymity” (p. 138).

Interviews were audio recorded, notes were taken, and the audio recording were transcribed by the researcher.

Interview Data Analysis

The following steps were taken to analyze the data gathered from the teacher interviews.

Phase One. Interviews were transcribed using Microsoft Word to allow for sorting and categorization. The researcher personally transcribed the audio recordings of the interviews which allowed for review and clarification of note taking. Special attention was made to analyze the conversational tone and additional observations from the interview through notes.

Phase Two. Interviews were individually analyzed and categorized were generated by general themes. The use of color coding assisted in sorting, organizing, and identifying themes.

Phase Three. The categories identified from the interviews were sorted into a table. Significant direct quotations were inserted next to each category to support the framework of the categories. The table assisted in identifying specific patterns within responses to allow for themes to be created.

Phase Four. Initial themes were then derived from categories, patterns of responses, and supporting quotations. Multiple rounds of revisions were made in order to combine, edit, and synthesize the data with the intent of condensing the number of categories without losing accuracy or authenticity of responses.

Final synthesis of data. The final analysis formed the core of research. Data was merged from all teacher interviews. The data was analyzed for patterns and themes. This synthesis of the data into themes was sorted to address the research questions by exploring how teachers perceived their experiences and roles within Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools in the district and by understanding what motivated them to migrate and what could have been done to retain them in the Title 1 settings.

Interview Questions

The following interview questions were informed by the previously stated research questions and were coded to show their relationship.

1. Tell me a little bit about you and your career path coming out of college to where you are today. (Building Rapport)
2. What are things you liked about working in a Title 1 school? (RQ2)
3. Can you tell me what you didn't like about working in a Title 1 school? (RQ2)
4. How does working in a Title building differ from what you do today? (RQ1)
 - Leadership
 - Support
 - Job responsibilities
 - Student behavior
 - Work Conditions
5. Talk to me about what influenced your decision to move schools. (RQ2)
 - Personally
 - Professionally

6. If your job was to recruit teachers to join you here, how would you describe work in this building? (RQ1)
7. If you could sit down with the superintendent of Suburban Public Schools for 10 minutes and tell them what is needed in Title 1 schools, what would you say? (RQ3)
8. What could the district do to encourage people to stay in Title buildings? (RQ3)

Researcher Bias

A particularly important advantage and motivating factor to my study is that I have a personal and professional connection to the questions I am asking as a researcher. While this has not always been deemed as ideal in a research setting, Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue:

Choosing a research problem through the professional or person experience route may seem more hazardous than through the suggested literature routes. This is not necessarily true. The touchstone of your own experience may be more valuable an indicator for you of a potentially successful research endeavor. (p. 35-36)

This is true for me because I am highly motivated to investigate my chosen topic. I taught in a Title 1 elementary school in Suburban Public Schools for ten years. My professional experiences working in this setting sparked a personal as well as professional interest in understanding teachers' motivations and experiences working in Title 1 buildings versus non-Title 1 buildings. I became interested in understanding how the role and work of a teacher is different when teaching affluent student populations versus teaching low socioeconomic settings. The district I worked in was a unique and exceptional setting to observe differences between non-Title 1 schools and Title 1 schools within the same district. Different buildings that were often mere blocks away from one another would serve student populations that housed very different socio-economic statuses. District-wide professional development meetings was the perfect place for teachers to communicate about their perceived experiences, duties, and difficulties. The fact that Title 1 teachers and non-Title 1 teachers expressed different

viewpoints, perceived roles, and needs were apparent to me within these conversations and spurred my interest to investigate further. My experience working in a Title 1 school allowed me the first-hand experience to witness challenges our building faced, such as: high teacher turnover rates. This problem has motivated my research to this point. I have been personally devoted to my student population working in a Title 1 school. My research investigates a problem that negatively impacts the success of the student populations I have cared for and served. Professionally, I am also motivated to find ways to retain teachers in Title 1 buildings because this study can inform policy and administration in Suburban Public Schools for the improvement of the functioning of the organization as well as success of the students. I have future career goals to work in educational administration and this research can also inform me as a future administrator.

I am aware that if research design is guided by personal desire without a careful consideration of the impact, the conclusion of the research is in danger being flawed and biased. Therefore, I am cognizant of how my experiences could shape my research, and I am committed to following proper qualitative research design to keep myself from leading towards any bias. It is important for me to recognize and take account of my personal and professional goals that drive and motivate my research. It is also essential to know my personal ties to the study because those ties can also provide me with a valuable source of insight, theory, and data about the phenomena I am studying (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Chapter Four

Findings and Data Analysis

This study investigated intra-district teacher migration patterns in one of the largest suburban school districts in Kansas. More specifically, this study describes and examines perceptions and influences that motivated teachers to leave Title 1 schools and migrate into non-Title 1 schools within the same district. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the overarching question: “Why are teachers migrating out of Title 1 schools and into non-Title 1 schools within the same district?” In this chapter, I present the study’s findings based on data collected from twelve semi-structured qualitative interviews. The primary mode of data collection required qualitative interviews due to the nature of the data being “things we cannot directly observe” such as personal experiences, thought processes, influences, and beliefs (Merriam, 2009). The interview participants were purposefully selected based on their migration patterns and possess the “potential to contribute to the development of insight and understanding of the phenomenon” of migration within Suburban Public Schools (Merriam, 2009, p. 105). The chapter begins with a descriptive analysis of the interview participants and rates of completion, followed by interview data analysis to address each of the three research questions.

Descriptive Interview Data

The Suburban Public Schools Human Resource Department gave the researcher a list of teachers’ names who migrated from Title 1 schools into non-Title 1 schools. The SPS database filtered teacher migrators to ensure that the participants’ reasons for migrating were not due to personal factors outside of the workplace such as family relocation, illness, or death. This process occurred before the potential list of teachers was provided to the researcher. A list of sixty-nine teachers’ names were provided; thirty-two percent of those teachers were no longer

working for the school district as of May 2018. Forty-seven teachers were emailed a request to participate in an interview for the qualitative study on May 7, 2018. The email document (see Appendix C) was approved by Suburban Public Schools (see Appendix B) and the University of Kansas' Human Subjects Committee – Lawrence (HSCL) (see Appendix A). In addition, the email included the list of the interview questions to provide clarity and transparency as to the purpose of the study. The interview questions (see Appendix E) were edited and revised through a preliminary mock interview process and were approved by Suburban Public Schools (see Appendix B) and the University of Kansas HCSL (see Appendix A). Two weeks later, with the response rate of fourteen teachers (29 percent) an additional email was sent to twelve teachers to schedule interviews via *Sign-Up Genius*¹. Two of the responding teachers were dropped from the study because they did not meet the requirement of being an elementary classroom teacher. One of the volunteers was a school nurse and the other was a school speech pathologist, neither whom taught in a classroom with students. All of the participants were purposefully selected elementary school teachers who “had an experience worth talking about, and an opinion of interest to the research” regarding migration within Suburban Public Schools (Merriam, 2009, p.106). The purposefully selected participants specifically and voluntarily requested an internal transfer to the SPS Human Resource Department with the intention of leaving their present Title 1 school. Their transfer request was accepted by the district. They selected a non-Title 1 school who had a job opening and applied and interviewed for a teaching position within that school and was later offered a job by that school's principal in the same district. Table 2.1 uses pseudonyms in place of teacher interview participants' names and presents the number of years each

¹ SignUp Genius is an online sign up service that simplifies the process of coordinating events and people.

participant taught in Title 1 schools and non-Title 1 schools within SPS as well as the total number of years taught, which includes years taught outside of the district.

Table 2.1

Teacher Demographics

| Teacher Name | Sex | Teaching Position | Grades Taught | Years taught in Title 1 in SPS | Years taught in Non-Title 1 in SPS | Years taught outside SPS | Total Years Taught |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. <i>Jolie</i> | F | English Language Learner teacher | K-6 | 8 | 7 | 0 | 15 |
| 2. <i>Dawson</i> | M | teacher | 4, 6, 7, 8 | 5 | 11 | 0 | 19 |
| 3. <i>Laura</i> | F | Special Education teacher | K-6 | 5 | 13 | 2 | 20 |
| 4. <i>Addison</i> | F | teacher | K, 2, 3 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 10 |
| 5. <i>Kim</i> | F | teacher | K, 1, 2 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 6 |
| 6. <i>Kari</i> | F | Library Media Specialist | K-5 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| 7. <i>Tamara</i> | F | teacher | 1, 3, 4 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 12 |
| 8. <i>Bethany</i> | F | teacher | K, 1 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 15 |
| 9. <i>Annie</i> | F | teacher | 2, 3, 5, 7 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 8 |
| 10. <i>Cami</i> | F | teacher | 2, 5, 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 5 |
| 11. <i>Taryn</i> | F | Special Education teacher | K-5 | 6 | 11 | 5 | 22 |
| 12. <i>Kaitlin</i> | F | teacher | 1, 5 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 10 |

It is important to acknowledge that within this study all of the teachers who were interviewed are describing Title 1 through the lens of having taught in a non-Title 1 school as well. It is important to identify that the purposefully selected teachers' perceptions of Title 1 schools could have been changed by their experiences teaching in non-Title 1 schools.

Therefore, teachers are not reporting purely from a Title 1 teacher's point of view. Some of the teachers have taught in non-Title 1 schools for long periods of time. Their experiences in non-Title 1 settings have the potential to transform their perception of what their work was like in the Title 1 schools and vice versa. If they had not had experiences teaching in both Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools, their perceptions might be different.

Another consideration within this study is the fact that teachers who are reporting on their experiences working within Title 1 have taught in Title 1 for varying amounts of time. Five of the teachers have been out of the Title 1 setting for at least seven years. Those teachers' names are: Tayrn, Tamara, Laura, Dawson, and Jolie. Seven of the teachers have been out of Title 1 five years or less. Those teachers' names are: Kaitlyn, Cami, Kari, Kim, Addison, Bethany, and Annie. An increased length of time lapsing between teachers' experiences working in Title 1 and being interviewed could create greater potential for incorrect transmission of facts, selective memory, exaggeration, and bias.

Participants selected their own preferred method of interview on the *SignUp Genius*. I conducted five phone interviews and seven person-to-person interviews where I met those participants in their school buildings after school hours. The phone interviews were audio recorded with my Smartphone using the *TapeACall Pro App*. The person-to-person interviews were audio recorded using my Smartphone with the *JustPressRecord App*. Each participant was asked permission to be recorded and signed a waiver approved by the University of Kansas HCSL (see Appendix D). All 12 of the participants taught in a Title 1 building in Suburban Public Schools at least three years before requesting a transfer that afforded them the opportunity to interview for a new position in a non-Title 1 building within the same school district. Some teachers who make this request within SPS are denied the opportunity to interview in another school. The Human Resource Director in Suburban Public Schools explained that when there are high levels of turnover in a building, they try and keep at least one teacher with some experience in each grade level. Therefore, if two teachers in one grade level ask to transfer and are approved, the third and final teacher would be denied a transfer request. This is the primary mechanism the district has used to combat teacher turnover. The district did not have any data

on how many transfer requests are made or denied each year. Seven years ago the Suburban Human Resources Director pulled together Title 1 teacher focus groups to try and uncover reasons teachers were leaving their Title 1 schools. The focus groups responses were varied, and the issue of teacher turnover in Title 1 schools persists and continues to increase.

Once in their non-Title 1 position, the least number of years taught in their new non-Title 1 school was two years. The average number of years the selected sample of teachers taught in Title 1 was five years, and the average number of years they taught in non-Title 1 schools was six years. The participants' total years of teaching experience ranged from five years to 22 years. The sample of teachers selected for this study reflect the migration population in a variety of ways. Males represented seven percent of the migration population district-wide compared to an eight percent representation within the sample. Twenty-one percent of the district migration population represented Special Education (SPED) and English Language Learner (ELL) teachers compared to the sample which includes sixteen percent of teachers working in Special Education and ELL. The specialist teachers (i.e., library media specialist, music, physical education, Spanish, computer, and art teachers) represented five percent of district migration and eight percent of the sample interview participants. It would have been ideal to select teachers who mirror the average amount of Title 1 teaching experience within the migrator population, but that data was not available. Therefore, a variety of years of experience is represented within the sample of interviewees.

Research Question #1: Perceptions of Title 1 Schools Compared to Non-Title 1 Schools

In this section, I begin by focusing on what teachers perceive to be different about working in Title 1 schools compared to non-Title 1 schools in SPS. Understanding teachers' beliefs and perceptions about Title 1 and non-Title 1 buildings helps to begin to understand their

thought processes around the decision to migrate. What about their perceptions motivated them to move? The second part of this question, and equally important, is whether these perceptions were based in reality once they experienced teaching in a non-Title 1 school. What aspects about their perceptions were based in reality, and what perceptions were not based in fact? The multifaceted topic regarding teacher perception is simply stated within research question #1, which asks:

1. *What do teachers perceive to be similarities and differences between Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools?*

My analysis will address perceptions, opinions and beliefs of the interview participants before they transferred out of a Title 1 school and into a non-Title 1 school, and I will then follow up to reveal what about their perceptions were true to their experience once they did transfer into a non-Title 1 school. Common themes of what teachers perceived to be different about Title 1 and non-Title 1 buildings in SPS were identified. Teacher perceptions of differences are organized by the following themes: workload and stress, instructional focus, scheduling autonomy, parental involvement, working conditions, and student behavior.

Workload and stress. The most common belief across all teachers migrating out of Title 1 schools included the perception that moving to a non-Title 1 school would relieve the size of their workload which would reduce stress. Nine participants revealed they perceived work in Title 1 schools to be more extensive, time consuming, and stressful than working in non-Title 1 schools before they transferred. Addison summarized this commonly held belief by stating:

There's more tension in Title schools just because . . . there is more pressure on test scores. You have more stress because you have to meet all the kids diverse needs, get this kid speaking English, and then they have to pass the grade level test on top of it all. It got to the point where I just couldn't do it anymore. I just couldn't. I was sick of bringing work home with me. I was sick of doing work on the weekends. I want to be able to walk out of my classroom at four thirty like teachers in other buildings do.

Similar to what Addison reported, nine of the twelve teachers agreed that their perception regarding workload and stress was true and that they did not have as large of a workload and did not feel as stressed once they moved into non-Title 1 buildings. Three teachers stated that they did not experience less work once they moved to a non-Title building, but they agreed that the work was less stressful. Much of the reported stress in Title 1 was perceived to be caused by external factors that hinder the teaching process and were outside their ability to control. External factors might include: students not coming to school prepared to learn or in an emotional state to learn, language barriers, lack of nutrition or sleep, the structure and schedule of pull-out programs cutting instructional time into short segments. These examples are external factors that teachers perceived to impede their ability to successfully teach students. Annie describes how stress is perceived to be different in a Title 1 school by stating:

It's just a different kind of stress. I mean, yes, you still have battles in non-Title; but they're just really different battles. I felt like in Title 1, I was doing management all the time: managing behavior, managing this kid's emotional issues [like what happened at home] calling parents because this kid doesn't have a lunch, managing my emotional state when a kid is taken away after a DCF [Department of Children and Families] call and reported child abuse. I mean just all of it. It's definitely more stressful. Where in non-Title 1 you know I teach a lesson and I don't have to stop 15 times to say, hey are you paying attention or why is your head down or keep your hands to yourself. I really do get to actually teach.

While teachers report that the stress in Title 1 schools is detrimental, they conversely report that the overwhelming amount of need in Title 1 schools presents an opportunity for teachers to “make a difference”. All of the teachers also report a feeling of being needed in Title 1 buildings that provide them a sense of “purpose” and that is “rewarding” and “fulfilling”. Kim gives an example by stating:

I had a student who was living with his grandmother and they had cockroaches really bad. So, the Title 1 Reading teacher and myself we got together and we helped pay for an exterminator. And it was like a multiple treatment thing. And the kids had never been

to McDonald's in their life and they'd never been to a movie theater. So while the exterminator was at their house because they couldn't be in there we took the kids to McDonald's to go to a movie. So they had the best day ever. Yes. So it was good. You know situations like that you really are more than just a teacher you're really helping them you know you are making a difference in their lives.

The majority of teachers describe their work in Title 1 buildings as a chance to “help others” and some of the “most important work they have done”. Ultimately, the overwhelming need in Title 1 schools can provide teachers with a sense of significance or moral purpose to help others.

However, as teachers begin to perceive their work to be overwhelming and potentially impossible they experience high levels of stress and anxiety.

It is important to consider that teachers refer to the work they do in Title 1 settings as “never being finished” and “never enough”. This perception of “not being successful” in their role could lead to emotional exhaustion that adds to the perception that they do more work in a Title 1 building. Three of the twelve teachers interviewed mentioned that they did not do more work in Title 1, but it was “more stressful work”. They countered that instead of preparing interventions in Title I buildings they were preparing enrichment activities for their large population of gifted students in the non-Title 1 schools or communicating with actively involved parents. Taryn states:

I work just as much in my non-Title 1 school. I don't think there is more work in Title exactly. I just think it is harder work. Instead of finding food for a kid who is starving I am now emailing parents back about which standard I am teaching and why. I am still working hard and crazy busy at work, but it doesn't feel as stressful.

Instructional focus. In addition to the different type of stress, the instructional focus in Title 1 buildings is reported to be different compared to non-Title 1 buildings. While none of the teachers predicted that there would be a dramatic shift in their instruction, a majority of the teachers report that the same curriculum is taught very differently. Cami explains, “In a Title 1 building you are working with most students who are below grade level struggling just coming to

school and are in crisis mode all the time and because of that instruction looks very different.”

The teachers describe spending a lot of time getting their students into an optimal emotional state before they are able to learn in their Title 1 buildings. That might include daily social-emotional lessons or emotional regulation activities and then differentiating instruction to meet the needs of the below level learners or English Language Learners. Taryn describes a Title 1 teachers’ student-centered mindset with questions like, “How do I catch these kids up? What do we do to close this gap? How can I take these standards and teach them in the simplest way possible?”

When working with below level learners, teachers comment on the satisfaction of seemingly small achievements. Teachers describe the slow and slight progressions that their Title 1 student make and discuss how those improvements might not be celebrated by others due to the fact that the student is still below grade level and might have low test scores compared to peers or standardized norms. However, when progress is made, Dawson describes a pride that comes from even slight gains in Title 1:

So I think that the thing that people love about Title 1 is that because those growths are so, so small that when you do have somebody that does finally get it, it is an accomplishment like none other. It is a huge deal to you. Yeah. Whereas here [in a non-Title 1 school] somebody does well and you're like hey good job man that's awesome. But it's not that whole bring tears to your eyes type feeling.

In a non-Title 1 setting, Taryn reports focusing on the complete opposite. The majority of her students were on or above grade level and several were excelling and qualified as gifted learners. She describes focusing on extension activities that expand the curriculum. She portrays parents as being ready and willing to provide supplies who also demand fun, engaging, and complex ways to demonstrate learning. Taryn states, “Teaching then becomes not how are we going to close gaps, but how are we going to excel and create products that demonstrate creativity and innovation?” These are very different focuses with the exact same curriculum.

Title 1 schools express a need to fill in gaps of missing skills from prior grades or a need to focus on filling in lacking background knowledge before addressing grade level standards. Non-Title 1 schools describe a situation where teachers are teaching to mastery of the grade level standards, but are then able to extend the standards to meet higher levels of thinking and learning processes within Blooms Taxonomy. Kaitlin further describes teaching in non-Title 1 settings by stating:

In a non-Title 1 building the possibilities are endless because we can ask for parents to bring in things to donate, to come in and help, or even bring in their business or experts in the community. The sky is the limit. If we want a particular iPad app or resource we can ask our principal for money or PTO would raise money for us. We can even ask the PTO to pay for field trips. Planning lessons and activities in non-Title 1 buildings is a completely different experience.

In summary, Title 1 teachers' target below-level learners and focus their instruction on remedial strategies to fill learning gaps. When their students make small gains they feel an extreme sense of pride even when the gains may not be considered to be meeting grade level expectations. Teachers in non-Title 1 schools report adjusting their instruction to extend and enrich grade level standards where they boast high achieving students with matching test scores.

Scheduling autonomy. Eight of the 12 teachers describe a perception that migrating out of Title 1 schools would alleviate the conflict and stress associated with scheduling due to pull-out programs and prohibit the unintended consequence of having short segmented blocks of instructional time to teach. Cami paints a picture of what a Title 1 schedule looks like to a classroom teacher:

I couldn't ever get to the meat of my lesson because my schedule was so chopped up. I had twenty minutes here and then half my class left for ELL for thirty minutes and then we would have lunch and then I would have another thirty minutes to complete the lesson. I could never get into a groove. I would introduce a concept and get the kids excited about it and then have a big long break, and then by the time we got back to it all the momentum was gone and the kids had forgotten what I modeled before the break. That kind of a schedule makes for a terrible lesson design.

Teachers report that Title 1 schools have additional pull-out programming that makes scheduling difficult and complex. Kim further details how students who were in pull-out programming would get frustrated and behind due to the scheduling constraints:

Many teachers only taught when everyone was in the classroom....when there were pull-outs they would give the remaining students' time to work problems in small groups and complete independent work or the assignment. If students were pulled out of the room, when they returned they would come back to an empty worksheet or activity that everyone else in the class had completed and the teacher was ready for the next lesson. Those kids who were pulled would often miss their opportunity to practice skills in class or complete assignments which would become homework and be extremely frustrating and defeating to that kid who struggles and is pulled out.

Teachers justify their perception by stating that moving into the non-Title 1 school eliminated a majority of the pull-outs and allowed them the autonomy to schedule their school day as they see fit. Bethany explains the scheduling autonomy she feels in a non-Title 1 school:

In a non-Title building I can switch what I teach and when I teach it to whatever suits the needs of the kids the best. That's the biggest difference. I felt like I was suiting my class to fit into my schedule in Title because I always had to stop teaching because of all the pull-outs.

Surprising to the teachers once they left Title 1, six teachers mentioned that now without pull-out programs, they lack instructional support provided by Title 1 resources when they have students with instructional needs. Title 1 schools reportedly have many support personnel on staff to help the classroom teacher such as an ELL specialist or reading and math specialist. These positions are not staffed in non-Title 1 schools. These teachers mentioned that they now feel "all alone" when a student is struggling. In Title 1 buildings they felt they had a team around them to collaborate and problem solve kid needs. They describe feeling like all the responsibility rests on them in non-Title 1 schools and that teachers do not really collaborate, but rather keep to themselves. Kari details:

In my Title 1 school I had thirteen ELL kids who would get pulled out and received additional support and instruction. Now I have one ELL kid, but that kid barely speaks

English and has a lot of need and I do not have anyone to ask for help. He doesn't get pulled and I don't have a reading teacher to help me. He is in my room all day. It is all on me as a classroom teacher. Kids don't get pulled and you don't have to worry about scheduling or pull-outs in non-Title 1 [schools], but now you work alone.

In addition, seven teachers reflect on how the pull-out programs require teachers to collaborate.

Teachers report that Title 1 schools requires high levels of collaboration due to the variety of specialists within the building. These teachers describe experiences where collaborative problem solving has helped their staff build trusting relationships where they become close "like family".

Annie describes:

In Title 1 buildings you really get to know people. Good or bad. You work with them so much and communicate with them so much. It really creates a family that you really love or really hate. I was fortunate. The people I worked with in Title 1 schools became lifelong friends of mine. It's hard to not get close to people when you are working together to help a kid get new glasses or find a bed for a family because they sleep on the floor. I asked my coworkers to help me all the time, and they were there every day. Fighting the same fight I was. They understood how hard it was. I'd ask them to watch my class when a kid was broken down crying on the floor or when a kid got in a fight on the playground. They cared about the kids as much as I did. I could talk to them at lunch about how hard it was. In non-Title you still care about your co-workers and get to know them on a personal basis, but there isn't the same bond because the work we do isn't quite as dramatic all the time. You don't have to collaborate as much and you aren't in the trenches together so-to-speak.

Teachers describe staff relationships in non-Title 1 buildings to be more "formal", "surface-level" exchanges compared to the "deep", "heartfelt conversations" teachers experience in Title 1 buildings.

In summary, teachers predicted that leaving Title 1 schools would alleviate scheduling conflicts and the unintended consequences of pull-out programs. Once they transferred and experienced teaching in non-Title 1 schools they essentially confirmed that belief. However, teachers were surprised to realize that they did not have help from ELL specialists or reading or math specialists in their new buildings when they needed instructional support for student needs and teachers reportedly "did not feel as close to their co-workers in their non-Title 1 buildings"

because they did not experience as much collaboration or bonding opportunities to have deep conversations.

Parental involvement. All twelve of the teachers report a “lack of involvement” from parents in Title 1 buildings as a negative situation they felt would be remedied by moving into a non-Title 1 building. All of the teachers describe a similar experience where the majority of parents in Title 1 schools didn’t ask a lot of questions, often didn’t respond to emails or return phone calls, and when they attended meetings they didn’t interject with what the teacher was doing or reported. Five teachers mentioned that when working with non-English speaking parents, it made their job “more difficult” because they needed to go through a translator in order to communicate through newsletters, emails, homework, and parent teacher conferences. Teachers reported getting very little recognition during Teacher Appreciation Week with very limited gifts around the holidays. Overall, teachers explain that they had to change their expectations in Title 1 settings, Kim explains:

I had to completely change my homework policy. I went to absolutely no homework because you can't expect homework to come back. And that's part of the growth factor because you know that they're not doing it at home and so they're not around it as much. You're not going to have as much growth. It's so frustrating when you just work so hard and you just don't see the payoffs because they're not being reinforced at home. Not having the supports at home was a struggle. When you have a kid that is standing up throwing something across the room you can't say I need to talk to mom and dad because first of all mom and dad may not be there, but also mom and dad have other things they are worried about. Their kid’s school is like fourth or fifth on their priority list. You know it wasn't something that they would really respond to or support. They trusted you to do your job and expected you to take care of what happens at school without anything from them.

Teachers reiterate that parental involvement in Title 1 schools was limited. Limited parent contact could be because parents in Title 1 schools typically have less education and are intimidated by the formal processes, language, and documentation that is common place in educational settings. Another possibility could be that the parents have experienced negative

interactions with schools in the past, which leads to mistrust and uncertainty. Another possibility is that schools are government entities that take part in legal practices such as mandated reporting, therefore; are not perceived to be trustworthy. These reasons could impact parent involvement in Title 1 schools. Teachers report that parents did not show up to Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings and they did not participate in fundraisers or school events. The teachers explain that many parents work multiple jobs, or work in the evenings, or do not have transportation, or do not have the means to provide for extra-curricular activities such as attending school carnivals. Teachers do not request donations for classroom supplies or projects because the community does not have the means to provide for extra supplies.

Teachers paint an entirely different picture of parental involvement in SPS's non-Title 1 buildings. Bethany details:

At my Title 1 school we had to plan all the holiday parties and buy and bring everything for the parties for the kids and run everything during the parties. At my non-Title 1 school I had a room parent and she planned everything and then on the day of the party all of a sudden all the parents showed up and took over and I just sat back and watched my kids have a great time and I got to enjoy it with them. And then for teacher appreciation week she had set up where like every single day I had kids bringing in things off my favorites list. It was unbelievable. I bet I brought home over four hundred dollars' worth of gifts they had purchased for me. At my Title 1 school no one even mentioned teacher appreciation week. The biggest difference between the buildings to me is parent involvement.

Parents in non-Title 1 schools are typically professionals who most likely have had positive experiences in schools in the past. It is common for them to have formal education and advanced degrees. Parents who are professionals within highly affluent student populations might have a higher level degree compared to teachers within the school, and then feel they have a superior knowledge base, even if they have no formal educational training.

Non-Title 1 schools in SPS reportedly have highly functioning PTOs that raise as much as \$35,000 during school walk-a-thon fundraisers. Teachers describe situations where parents often request more homework and expect teachers to communicate weekly if not daily. Teachers explain that they cannot send projects home with students because they will come back completed by the parents rather than the students themselves. Parents attend school functions in high numbers and some parents even come to school lunches daily to sit and eat with their students. Teachers Appreciation Week in Non-Title 1 buildings is described as a “spectacle” of “personalized gifts and treats” and a “celebration across the whole school.” Teachers report parents constantly sending in thank you notes or providing a complimentary coffee or gift card to the teacher’s favorite restaurant as a way to show appreciation. On holidays teachers in these schools receive gifts from a majority of their students.

All of the teachers agree that they were correct in their assumption that parents would be more involved in non-Title 1 schools, but they did not predict the added element and stress of “parental input, criticism, and communication expectations” that comes with that partnership. Teachers report that they spend the majority of their time in non-Title 1 schools not focused on instructional strategies, but instead focused on parental communication. Kim details, “Oh yes I still have academics I worry about, but the overriding thing is to basically take a picture from today's activity for the parents to see on Seesaw [a website] your job becomes public relations and communication with parents.” All of the Title 1 teachers describe their disbelief regarding the amount of time they now spend communicating with parents on a daily basis in their current non-Title 1 school. Dawson estimates that he received ten parent emails throughout an entire school year while in his Title 1 school, and about 1,000 parent emails now in his non-Title 1 building. He summarizes a commonly reported situation where parents are eager to know and

question what is being taught, why it is being taught, why their student got the grade they got, and how their child can receive personalized instruction or extra credit in non-Title 1 schools. The majority of the teachers describe the perception of parent “over-involvement” in the non-Title 1 schools as the hardest part of teaching in their new school. They also describe the over-involvement as getting in the way of the student’s growth academically as well as emotionally. Teachers describe situations where parents do the work for their student, demand a retake if a student misses points on a test, and expect extra credit to ensure their student receives an A. Teachers talk about the backlash they face in non-Title 1 schools when they give students behavioral consequences. Jolie explains:

The problem is that here if you have a consequence then the parents get involved and the parents stick up for their kid whether they're right or wrong. And that's frustrating. It gets tiresome to fight those battles when you all you are trying to do is teach the kid to simply follow rules because in life you have to follow rules.

Teachers describe situations in non-Title 1 buildings where they question their own actions based on parent response. Laura explains:

Now I have to ask myself if it is worth me getting that e-mail when I give the kid a consequence because he doesn't have his work turned in. Is it worth the questioning about my rules that I will get or am I prepared to take a verbal lashing from a parent? It is completely the opposite from Title 1 [schools]. I never got an email from a parent bashing me in [my] Title 1 [school]. It just feels like there's such a need for everyone to be so super successful and just like perfect here [in non-Title 1 school]. You have to be perfect all the time you have to be the best and you have to be number one. You know they think if their kids aren't getting straight A's there must be something wrong with them. So they feel they need to make sure he gets straight A's because Sally's kid gets straight A's.

In summary, teachers experience a lack of parent involvement in Title 1 settings where parents do not impede school decisions but are also not reinforcing classroom expectations at home. Teachers comment that non- Title 1 schools have active parent organizations who support the school community and frequently provide them with gifts of appreciation and supplies for the

classroom, but with that support also comes expectations. Teachers express that in non-Title 1 settings they feel their professional judgement and expertise is often questioned, and they perceive that questioning to inhibit student growth. Teachers describe this as “exhausting” and “defeating”. In comparison to the stress they felt in their Title 1 position, teachers report the stress of dealing with “overinvolved” parents is not the same kind of stress or as detrimental as what they felt in their previous Title 1 schools. Ultimately, after reflecting on the differing experiences of parental engagement in both types of buildings, teachers reportedly experienced more acts of appreciation from the parents of students in non-Title 1 schools, but overall feel more trusted by parents of students in Title 1 schools to do their job.

Work conditions. Five teachers report that they did not think there was equity among Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools regarding work conditions before they transferred. Once teachers moved and had experiences working in both Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools within the district, nine teachers reported that there was not equity when comparing the building conditions. Teachers describe Title 1 buildings in the district as being “fifty years old” compared to “brand new” non-Title 1 schools. The older Title 1 buildings reportedly have “dingy, stained carpet, old paint, fewer windows, and lack open collaborative spaces.” The interviewees describe a situation where a new elementary school is built “about every two years” in their rapidly growing district and those new schools boast all “new innovative spaces and furniture and technology.” Addison describes renovations in her Title 1 building by explaining:

I knew our school was next in line for district renovations and updates. We were the very last elementary school to be renovated. I was so excited because I’d been into the other schools after they had their renovations and I’d seen their new lockers and classroom furniture and colorful walls and new flooring. I told my principal how excited I was to get a bulletin board wall. That’s all I wanted. After he met with architects and budgeters from the district they reported they found asbestos in our fifty year old building. At the end of the day we got to replace our twenty year old carpet, some new paint, and a new gym and cafeteria floor. Taking care of the asbestos took up the majority of our budget

and so our school didn't get any of the cool new innovative furniture or aesthetic updates or anything like that. I mean if you go into the school today you can tell it is a fifty year old building, it is gross. That isn't fair for our kids. Our kids deserve to have just as nice of a school as other kids in our district.

Seven of the teachers openly state that the conditions of the Title 1 buildings that they worked in did not impact their decision to leave the Title 1 school, but they did mention that the Title 1 buildings were often times "older" and "not up-to-date." Laura elaborates by stating, "The older buildings' have thick cement block walls and so none of our new technology's WIFI connections work and the heating and cooling units in our older buildings rarely work. I let the kids wear their winter jackets in class because it is often sixty degrees in my first grade classroom." Kari describes work conditions by stating, "I had old broken chairs in my Title 1 classroom while a brand new school only had two sections in second grade but four fully stocked classrooms in their building. They literally had two extra classrooms full of brand new furniture sitting there not being used while my Title 1 kids were using old broken chairs." Four of the teachers did not perceive Title 1 building conditions to be much different from non-Title 1 buildings until they moved. Cami explains,

It was so much worse than I thought, I was really shocked when I came here because wow these desks and carpet and classrooms are so much nicer. I just assumed that everything was the same in the district, but shame on me, I was wrong. I felt really bad for my Title kids. We didn't have lockers or cabinet space or new anything.

Aside from building conditions, teachers also mention a disparity in the ability of the different schools to raise money. Kari describes this situation by stating:

Our fundraiser, the walkathon, brings in around thirty-five thousand dollars. And that's just one fundraiser. At my Title 1 school it was like outrageous to hope that our PTO could get five thousand bucks. My school now (non-Title 1) buys some brand new extravagant thing every year. This year we are paying for the Leader in Me Program which is 10 grand a year. We are a light house school which is one of 200 in the world.

Teachers voice their concern that local PTO's are increasing the disparity and inequity across the school district. Addison states, "I was constantly buying poster board, expo markers, pencils, markers, coats, hats, gloves, shoes, and snacks for kids in Title 1 out of my own money. In my building now (non-Title 1) I never have to worry about purchasing any of those things."

Teachers point to the district to rectify the situation. They believe that the district has the "responsibility" to allocate district funds in a way that creates more equity.

Cami explains:

All kids should have equal opportunities within our district and right now if you go to different schools you might have very different experiences in SPS. In Title 1 we didn't have enough funds to go on field trips and if we did plan a field trip it had to be free and then we had to raise money to pay for the bus. We maybe went on one field trip a year. Other non-title 1 schools in our district go on two field trips per quarter. Their PTO raises money and they take those kids all over Kansas City. They go to the Kauffman Theatre and Royals Stadium and Science City at Union Station.

Ultimately, teachers perceive disparity between working conditions in Title 1 and non-Title 1 building in the district. However, seven teachers report those disparities were not a main factor in their decision to leave their Title 1 schools. Teachers identify that individual buildings have varying degrees of PTO monetary support and that those "differences creates inequalities" in the student experience across the district that they believe is "unfair" and the district's job to rectify.

Student behavior. Student behavior is a topic where teachers' perceptions vary greatly and change after experiencing both Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools. Ten of the twelve teachers report having a preconceived belief that once they left their Title 1 schools, they would not encounter the same extreme behavior issues they dealt with in Title 1. Teachers describe severe behaviors to be physical aggression like throwing chairs or hitting, kicking, and biting or defiant acts such as using profanity towards the teacher and non-compliance to teacher direction. Once

the teachers moved into their new non-Title 1 positions, four of the ten teachers report being surprised that severe behaviors were also occurring in the non-Title 1 schools. All four of these teachers changed their opinions on student behavior and concluded that “kids are kids no matter where you go” and expressed a belief that severe behaviors are “unrelated to where you teach.” Two teachers had a similar beliefs before leaving their Title 1 schools and continued to agree with their philosophy after transferring into a non-Title 1 school.

Exactly half of the teachers describe the opposite. Six of the twelve teachers interviewed state that extreme behaviors were “less frequent” in non-Title 1 buildings. Taryn explains:

There might be kids whining in a non-Title 1 school, but for the most part if you tell them to do something they're going to do it. Whereas in Title 1, I mean I had a kid tell me you can try to make me do that but it's not going to work. You know just flat out, a third grader telling me that and they're right. I mean there's really nothing to a certain extent that we as teachers can do to make them do something. And so I'd say defiance is a big, big difference between the Title 1 and non-Title 1 buildings.

The six teachers report that behavior in Title 1 schools was a major factor impeding their teaching process and a part of their decision as to why they left their Title 1 schools. When questioned further, these teachers reveal that the most stressful part of dealing with behavior in their Title 1 schools was the fact that there were not enough behavioral resources or structures in place to deal with the behavior. Kaitlin describes:

The last three years in Title 1 I had at least one child in my class that had to be removed because their behavior was severe enough. They're ripping down my walls or they're throwing scissors and can hurt another kid and I can't teach. This type of situation happened multiple times throughout the week. I called several different people and depending on if they are in the building they come and help calm the student down or stay with the student while I evacuate my students out of the classroom. So many times I tried to call and no one answered. Our principal would be out of the building or one of the people on the team wouldn't be at work that day and so eventually the kid ends up in the office in an empty room with an I-pad playing games and gets out of work. All it does is reinforce his severe behavior. Then when the principal comes back or the counselor happens to check on the student they say they've calmed down and can come back to class. The kid doesn't learn a thing because there isn't structure. There isn't any consistency. The process we have and plan we've made breaks down and is flawed.

Several teachers mentioned a belief that a combination of trauma and living in poverty impacts brain development, functioning, and learning, and therefore; more social emotional training and resources are needed in Title 1 schools (Szewczyk-Sokolowski, Bost, & Wainwright, 2005; Jensen, 2009; Robb, Simon, & Wardle, 2009; Buschkuehl, & Jaeggi, 2010). Teachers believe that school counselors, school psychologists, and social workers should be consistently staffed in Title 1 buildings.

While teachers disagree on which buildings have more severe behavioral issues, all of the teachers agree that there are not enough supports or the supports in place are not effective when dealing with extreme student behaviors. Half of the teachers report experiencing less severe behaviors in their non-Title 1 buildings, but they explain that when they do encounter extreme behavior they do not have enough supports in place and they have even less support and resources compared to Title 1 schools. Teachers overwhelmingly express a lack of behavioral supports, resources, and effective structures in all buildings. All teachers expressed a desire to have mental health professionals staffed in their buildings to better meet student social emotional needs.

Research Question #2: Motivating Factors to Migrate

The interview participants were asked to articulate the three primary reasons they decided to migrate out of Title 1 schools and move into non-Title 1 schools within the same district. In the next section I will describe how their responses were coded for themes and then organized into general categories. Seven broad categories emerged that explain their decision to migrate (1) inability to meet the overwhelming need of students and stress, (2) extra work, (3) unintended consequences of pull-out programs, (4) student behaviors, (5) turnover, (6) lack of equity, (7) leadership. This section will address research question #2 which states,

2. *How do teachers who transfer out of Title 1 and into non-Title 1 schools within the same district describe their motivations for migrating?*

Table 2.1 shows the frequency in which teachers ranked one of the seven themes as one of their top three motivating factors for leaving Title 1 schools in SPS.

Table 3.1 *Teacher Migration Motivator Ranking Frequency*

| Teacher | Overwhelming Need/Stress | Pull-Out Programming | Extra Work | Student Behavior | Turnover | Lack of Equity | Leadership |
|-----------------|--------------------------|----------------------|------------|------------------|----------|----------------|------------|
| #1 Jolie | | 3 | | 2 | | | 1 |
| #2 Dawson | 3 | 1 | | | | | 2 |
| #3 Laura | 1 | 2 | | | 3 | | |
| #4 Addison | | | 2 | 1 | | 3 | |
| #5 Kim | 1 | | 2 | | | | 3 |
| #6 Kari | 3 | | | 1 | | | 2 |
| #7 Tamara | | | 2 | 3 | | | 1 |
| #8 Bethany | 1 | | | | 3 | 2 | |
| #9 Annie | 1 | | 3 | 2 | | | |
| #10 Cami | | 1 | | | | 2 | 3 |
| #11 Taryn | 1 | 3 | | | 2 | | |
| #12 Kaitlin | 3 | | | 2 | | | 1 |
| Total Frequency | 8 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 7 |

Overwhelming need and stress. Every teacher interview participant reported that while working in a Title 1 school they experienced a different kind of stress compared to working in a non-Title 1 school. Jolie explains, “The wide diversity of need is the hardest part of working in Title 1 because there is so much need and you're working so hard to help everyone. I mean you try so hard and you never feel like you're ever doing enough for the kids”. The stress they describe comes from a feeling of not being able to provide for their students’ basic fundamental needs such as being fed, clothed, or kept safe emotionally and or physically. Kim paints a picture of the need by saying:

We've got to feed them and you have to let them sleep when they need to. We have to emotionally regulate them, and cloth them, and teach them. We try to really take care of the kids, and provide things for them to take home. Teachers would wash kid's clothes and let kids stay after school to help them complete their homework and then drive them home. They did amazing things. They put shoes on their feet and paid soccer fees so they could be in a club. But yeah I mean the work, it just never stopped. It was never enough.

Many of the teachers indirectly described *Maslow's Hierarchy of Need* and explained that in order to successfully teach a student academic skills, the students' basic needs must be met first.

Figure 5 shows Maslow's classic hierarchy of student need that must be met before learning can take place.

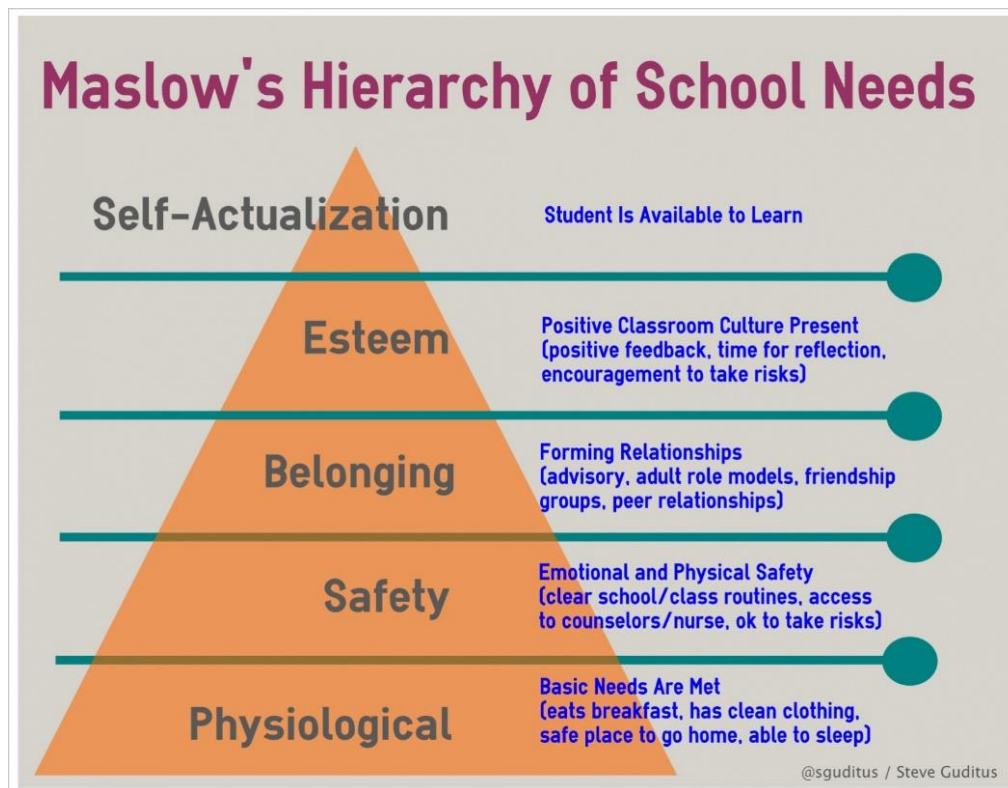


Figure 5: *Maslow's Hierarch of School Needs* (Figure Source: www.sguditus.blogspot.com)

Tamara exclaims, "How can I ask them to work long division problems when they haven't eaten since [they had] lunch yesterday?" Therefore, the teachers feel charged with the responsibility of providing basic needs to all of their students before students are able to learn. Teachers report buying daily snacks for their students with their own money. Tamara states, "At

first I bought a box of granola bars to keep in my desk....but more and more kids complained of hunger....I ended up spending about one hundred dollars each month of my own money buying snacks for my class. The principal said that the school couldn't afford to provide daily snacks for everyone. How do you draw the line and say one kid is really hungry and will get a snack and one kid isn't so I just paid for it all myself." Bethany describes the different needs in the buildings by saying:

I remember the first time the kids lined up for recess (in non-Title 1) and it was winter and all the kindergarteners had hats, gloves, and scarfs. I just started crying because I was like, Oh my gosh. Our kids in Title 1 never had those things and they'd have to run outside with a sweatshirt and they were ok with it, but it isn't fair. There are just noticeable moments where I was just speechless and dumbfounded with how different it is.

Basic needs also include the need for belonging and to feel loved. Many of the teachers describe the behavioral and social emotional needs of their students as "immense" and "overwhelming." Teachers explain that they spend a lot of time making sure the students feel connected and cared for, but that addressing some of the emotional needs within their classroom requires skills and training they are not equipped to provide. Kaitlin details:

I had a first grader who was taken away from her mom by the police and dropped off at her grandparents' who she had never met before. She was screaming and crying and hiding under the tables anytime we had a change in schedule. I didn't know how to help her, and our school counselor didn't have the time or training to give her what she needed. She needed a mental health specialist and we didn't have the resources. She didn't learn anything or make any academic progress the whole school year.

Many of the Title 1 elementary schools in SPS have one school counselor and share one school social worker between several buildings. Teachers shared story after story of students coming to school smelling of cat urine, living in flea or lice infested houses, complaining of pain from inadequate dental or health care, and traumatized from life experiences. Dawson shares:

I had a student who experienced physical and mental abuse and would become very

aggressive whenever he was triggered. He would snap if a character in a story we were reading reminded him of something or even if the math problem had a name in it he didn't like. We had no way of knowing what would trigger him, but we knew it was coming. Once he began throwing chairs or trying to fight others we would call the office and no one would answer. It was awful to not be able to protect your class from someone in your class. He needed mental health, and I'm not a counselor. It was a losing situation for everyone involved. Other kids and parents didn't like him and were scared of him and would ask to not be around him. He felt worse and worse about himself as time went on.

In these adverse situations and while trying to meet the vast needs of their students, teachers report a complex interaction where they feel a "closeness" to their Title 1 students where they "care for them like their own children". The dire situations and challenges these students and teachers face together reportedly help them form bonds that are deeper than a typical student teacher relationship. Teachers report that students in Title 1 schools really "need them" and they report this as the most positive and rewarding part of working in Title 1.

Dawson describes the benefits:

You do it all for the kids. They need you. You see it every day. You are helping make their lives better. It is the hardest and most rewarding job I have ever had. You aren't rewarded by people telling you that you did a good job or by a flashy bonus. You are rewarded with the relationship you make with that kid. That kid knows you care and you are making a difference in their life.

However, all of the Title 1 teachers interviewed reported they got to a point where they felt they could no longer do enough, and therefore perceived they were no longer being successful. Teachers reported being stressed about the wellbeing of their students on top of facing the challenges of increasing their students' test scores in an educational system that values standardized testing. Teachers describe the stress they experienced as "emotionally exhausting." They describe situations where their concern for their students overloaded into their personal lives and began to impact them negatively on a personal level. The majority of teachers reported that they didn't have any energy or time left for their own children and families because they were constantly at school working or bringing work home after hours. Their work with Title 1

students did not stop after the school day, and a majority reported feeling “intense anxiety” and “concern for their students throughout the night and during breaks from school.” Six different teachers mentioned they developed health issues because of the stress and explained that they needed to leave Title 1 because they could no longer handle the pressure. Bethany summarizes:

I just couldn't do enough for them. I would come home and worry are they getting fed or things like that. I started doing homework huddle after school to try to help students with homework and I was just constantly worrying, am I doing enough? Then it got to be like, am I doing too much? You get to a point where you feel like you couldn't do enough for them. I just felt like I needed a break. I finally needed to step away because I felt like I was constantly not doing enough, but also giving too much because there wasn't anything left of me.

Extra work. All of the teachers reported that their experience working in a Title 1 building was more “emotionally exhausting” and “stressful” work, and nine of the twelve teachers remarked that there was simply more work to be done in Title 1 buildings. These teachers report that Title 1 buildings require more time collaborating, scheduling, and creating interventions. Teachers in Title 1 schools also report frequently missing their lunch and plan times to deal with behavioral situations or neglect situations that require immediate action, communication, and urgency. Teachers in Title 1 buildings report spending extra time preparing documentation to justify a need for their students to receive extra resources and then extra time communicating and planning with specialized teachers (SPED or ELL), counselors, nurses, and school psychologists on how to provide those resources. Annie explains:

In Title I spent so much time documenting behavior or preparing data for our Care Team meetings. It was the only way I could get the principal and counselor and school psychologist together to try and figure out how to help a kid. Not only did I have to deal with the behavior and contact the right people to set up the meeting and schedule it. I had to document the behavior and bring the information to communicate to the team while making sub plans for my class when I was in the meeting. All of this is completely outside of planning lessons and actually teaching. It was so much work. I had those meetings all the time.

Suburban School District charges its teachers with the duty of creating, implementing, and documenting intervention groups for students whose Rasch Unit (RIT) score landed in the bottom 20 percent on their Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments in both reading and math. Teachers perceived this to add to their workload in the Title 1 settings. In a Title 1 building, a large number of students might score in the bottom 20 percent, whereas intervention groups might not be necessary for student populations of high achieving students in non-Title 1 building. Six of the teachers report that scheduling the intervention groups in a Title 1 building creates conflict due to Title 1 Reading, Title 1 Math, English Language Learner, and Special Education pull-outs. They explain that conflicts often arise between teachers in a Title 1 building who perceive a shared ownership over low achieving students. Specialist teachers might disagree on best practice, or what content to teach with low achieving students and might also push and pull for optimal scheduling times to meet with students. They pronounce that the students who are in most need of a small group intervention are often the same students who are pulled out of the classroom for the majority of the school day. As previously described, teachers report that this scenario leaves the classroom teacher with “short segmented chunks of time” for whole class instruction. It then becomes the classroom teacher’s responsibility to balance the pull-out schedules of many diverse learners while maintaining the responsibility that all curriculum is delivered to all students, which many report is unattainable within the time allotted after pull-outs. Teachers report an added stress associated with their name being attached to a student score who is not physically in their class for the majority of the school day. All teachers report feeling more stress during assessments in Title 1 schools due to the fact that a large portion of their class is low achieving. Based on the perspective of the teachers interviewed, the

Suburban School District intervention directive adds still another component to Title 1 teachers' workload that is disproportionate to their non-Title 1 teaching counterparts.

Pull out programming. When you put all of these pull-out programs together into a Title 1 classroom packed full of diverse needs, a schedule is formed. Though it is an unintended consequence of the pull-out programs, the schedule creates short segmented instructional blocks of time. Bethany explains:

Yeah I feel like I was not making a difference with the kids. I felt they were getting a little bit here, and a little bit here, and a little bit here, but not enough to sustain learning. I felt like I was selling those kids short and that they're not going to make the gains that they need to make because of the management of how the instruction was being cut up. And it was a very uncomfortable. I had never felt like that before in my entire life. I felt like nothing got accomplished and it just it ate at me because if I'm going to have a class I need to know that I'm being effective in that class.

Many of the teachers report that they only see some of their students for an hour and a half a day in the general education classroom and that often times those students are their lowest performing. Within that hour and a half teachers are expected to teach all of the subjects with fidelity and increase test scores. Kim extends Bethany's concerns by stating:

My top reason for leaving was that I didn't feel like I was given enough time to really make a difference with my kids in my class that needed it most because they just weren't in my classroom. I was really frustrated because I felt like you know these kids aren't getting better they're being pulled out of our room being sent to Title or being sent to ELL. And I felt like I can make gains with them but I was never given the opportunity. I couldn't even you know just pull them to the side at the table to work at them on anything they were having trouble with. So when they're struggling I couldn't help them individually I had to rely on title and ELL to do that and that wasn't happening.

ELL programming.

A majority of the classroom teachers report that they perceive ELL pull-outs to be ineffective and counter-productive for students. Teachers report that they believe their ELL students would get better instruction if they stayed with them in the general education setting. Teachers justify

that a large percentage of their class was pulled for up to an hour daily, and those students were being taken into a separate classroom with large numbers of students sometimes as many as thirty kids in one class of English Language Learners being taught by one specialized ELL teacher with ELL aides whom have no certification. Teachers report that the content and objectives of the ELL program were rarely communicated to the classroom teacher and did not align to any of the content or standards currently being taught in the general education classroom. ELL teachers and classroom teachers rarely had the opportunity to communicate and students would not bring back what teachers considered to be quality work. For example ELL students might bring back crossword puzzles or fill in the blank worksheets where none of the verbs and nouns agreed and there was no noticeable difference regarding what students were doing across different grade levels.

Per district recommendation, teachers do not teach new content during pull-outs. Pull-outs consist of at least two hours per school day. Therefore, teachers are not allowed to teach new content for at least two hours a day. Pull-out instructional programming creates limits on when teachers can teach their class, how often their students are in their classroom, and what they can teach at certain times through the school day. When teachers in the district reported that they did not have enough instructional minutes throughout the school day to teach their whole class, the district directed the teachers to only teach science and social studies curriculum while ELL students are out of the classroom to ensure ELL students are not missing reading or math. Therefore, an ELL student could potentially go through their entire elementary career without ever being taught a science or social studies lesson which creates disparity across learning opportunities for ELL students. Annie recounts:

There was nothing that was available to be taught during that time since I had eleven out of 18 kids leave my room for ELL pullout. And it was supposed to be this time when the kids are working independently on stuff. But really it was basically just two hours of no instruction and just sitting there. So I hated that. You know I really wish I could be teaching these kids pushing them further. My administrator did not want that. She wanted the learning to not be happening while they were out of the room and I could see her point you know obviously I don't want to be teaching kids and moving them on with lessons and things like that without half the class there. But that being said I mean if you're not teaching then what are you doing. It felt a lot like babysitting during that time.

Cami describes the experience of an ELL student in their school as being “segmented, jarring, and disconnected.” She states that the current ELL program is doing a disservice to its students. She further describes an experience with one of her first grade ELL students as “disheartening.” She details:

I had a little boy who would hide under his desk and curl into a ball and cry. He was being pulled out so much that it was totally overwhelming to him. You have to think about what he was experiencing. He was being pulled from room to room everyday as a limited English speaker with new and different adults that he didn't have strong relationships with who were teaching him unrelated content and standards and then he was pulled into a large group setting of thirty plus ELL students where it was loud and kids were everywhere and there was limited behavior management and organization. He was so lost and certainly wasn't able to learn. His anxiety was through the roof. He wasn't in the same classroom for more than thirty minutes the entire school day. He was being pulled each day for ELL, speech, Title Reading, and Title Math groups. That is too much.

The school administrator came together with a team of teachers and decided it would be best for that particular student to stay in the classroom and limit his pull-outs. The plan was to then add pull-outs slowly as the child adjusted. The teacher reported that the gains that child made while staying in her classroom for those six weeks were far greater than any of her other students who were continually pulled for intervention programming. This particular situation was dependent on the student's unique social-emotional needs, rather than a one-size-fits-all solution to the issue of ELL pull-outs.

Student behaviors. Teachers report that it was a regular occurrence for students'

behavioral issues to be triggered by unpredictable situations like a particular sound or even a difficult math problem that brings up feelings of inadequacy and failure. Kari describes:

You didn't know when it was going to happen or which kid it would be, but you knew it would happen. Inevitably, kids who experience trauma get set-off by things. It was unpredictable and sometimes the kid couldn't even tell you what set them off. It sometimes took hours to get a kid out of that state until they could calm down. It felt like walking on egg shells. Sometimes I could look at a kids face when they came into my classroom that morning and I knew the kind of day it was going to be. You would try to help the kid, but a lot of the time you would be at their mercy. They controlled how the day was going to go.

Teachers perceived students in Title 1 schools as being triggered in “greater frequency” with more “explosive, severe behaviors.” Nine teachers describe situations where their class was evacuated from the classroom because a student was being unsafe. Teachers describe how a crisis team of school personnel have been versed in a building plan for classroom evacuations and that several members of the team have been CPI (Crisis Prevention Institute) trained.

Teachers on these crisis teams are required to carry a walkie-talkie around to signal when teachers need to evacuate their classrooms. The crisis teams are trained to get to the situation and provide support. The personnel on these teams usually consist of whoever is in the building and available such as: a school principal, a school counselor, a school psychologist, Special Education teachers, the school nurse, and CPI trained paras. Teachers on the crisis teams report scenarios where they would be “pulled daily and sometimes more than once daily.” The unintended consequence of these crisis team plans is that all resources are pulled. Laura, a Special Education teacher, expresses the stress this caused by saying:

I know that doesn't sound like a big deal but I'm supposed to be doing intensified instruction with individual students. After three days in a row of being pulled to help with severe behaviors, now it's a big deal. And now I've got four or five kids I haven't done individualized goals with so I'm feeling stressed because I want my kids to be successful.

In regularly occurring crisis situations, counselors are not teaching their classroom lessons, Special Education teachers are leaving small groups of students who are required by law to provide individualized instruction, paras are not in classrooms helping students in need, and the school nurse may not be available. Classroom teachers also report that the crisis teams are not always available to help. The principal might be at district meetings, the school psychologist only comes one day a week, the counselor might be in an IEP meeting with a parent, and the nurse might be sick that day without a sub. They report it was not uncommon to try and call on the walkie-talkie and not get an answer or call the crisis team phone numbers and not have anyone answer or be told no one is available. In that situation the classroom teacher is left with a student exhibiting a severe behavior and a full classroom of kids to keep safe. This situation creates stress for classroom teachers. Teachers report wanting more support, resources, and structures in place. They report that the process and structures in place currently are “lacking, ineffective, and breaking down.”

Teacher turnover. Teachers in Title 1 buildings experience so much turnover that veteran teachers in those building are faced with a larger burden. Kari explains her experience:

The classes weren't split up totally evenly because there were so many new teachers in the Title 1 building. The teachers would come and go so they would put the behavior issues and low students with the more experienced teachers. By the time my third year came around I was one of the only originals left. So yeah I had way more to deal with just because they didn't want to overwhelm the new teachers and then I had to train the new teachers on top of it all.

The increased turnover also impacts the functioning of the school as an organization focused on a common goal. Laura describes a group of students in Special Education that had four different case managers within a year and a half of school. She explained what a detriment that was to those students who needed a consistent person in order to build trust and focus on their

individual educational plan goals. Laura states, “Very little progress was made with those students for those two school years.” Another aspect of turnover that is unique to Title 1 schools within SPS is the fact that SPS partners with a local university. The university’s teacher education program requires a full semester of student teaching experience which is housed in Title 1 buildings exclusively throughout SPS. Teachers report that the more hands on deck in the Title 1 schools the better, but they do mention that the most inexperienced teachers are often working with SPS’s neediest students. Once the student teaching experience is complete, SPS offers jobs to the new teachers which fills vacant teaching positions, but also puts brand new inexperienced teachers in Title 1 schools which could present as problematic.

Lack of equity. Kari describes a lack of equity among the buildings in the district by explaining:

Our fundraiser, the walkathon, brings in around thirty-five thousand dollars. And that's just one fundraiser. At my Title 1 school it was like outrageous to hope that our PTO could get five thousand bucks. My school now (non-Title 1) buys some brand new extravagant thing every year. This year we are paying for the Leader in Me Program which is 10 grand a year. We are a light house school which is one of 200 in the world. There's not equity and that's the biggest problem for me. We sit here and we say it's fair to purchase the same number of iPads for our Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools, and that they need the same class sizes, but that's equality and not equity. We teach our kids what equity is, and those non-Title 1 schools are purchasing things with their PTO money that other kids in our district do not have access to and that is wrong.

Addison described a scenario where she wanted to purchase a water bottle filling station for her Title 1 school after her class did a lesson on the three states of matter and boiled their school drinking water down to find huge calcium deposits on the pan. She researched and found that each of the water bottle filling station costs \$1200 and a neighboring non-Title 1 school had four of them purchased by their PTO. She expressed her frustration that a 50 year old school building with 50 year old pipes has water coming out of it that is full of calcium that the students and staff are drinking and a brand new schools with brand new pipers are getting water bottle filling

stations with UV filtered pure, clean water all in the same district. Teachers express a belief that the district has a moral responsibility to allocate resources and funds to ensure equity across its schools rather than simply allocating equal funds to each building.

Leadership. Seven of the twelve teachers report that leadership is one of the top three reasons why they left their Title 1 schools. Teachers reportedly want buildings leaders who “hold teachers to high standards,” are “ethical,” and who “have the same expectations for everyone in the building”. The most commonly reported attribute of a successful Title 1 building leader is someone who is willing to “look outside the box to do the right thing for individual kids” while still upholding ethics within policies. Teachers describe a need for Title 1 administrators who are “hands on” and willing to make the parent phone call and arrange transportation for a student to go to a dentist appointment when parents can’t get off work or don’t have a working vehicle. They describe a need for building administrators who are “present,” “visible,” and who “follow through” when they say they will be somewhere or do something and will “respond to email communications.” Organization is reported as key in Title 1 buildings because of the complex schedules and necessary collaboration among adults. Teachers reportedly want an administrator who is willing to help with behavior issues by providing consistent structures, supports, and resources. The teachers explain how important it is to them that their leaders are supportive of their roles as parents and family members. They want to work for someone who understands that they have families and allows them to leave work when a child is sick, or go to see their mother in the hospital on short notice without guilt. They also reportedly want someone with “strong ethics” and morals who inspires them to work hard and acknowledges their work and lets them know that they are appreciated.

Remorse over leaving Title 1 buildings. The participants all voiced a deep sadness and remorse for leaving their Title 1 schools. A majority of the teachers described their decision to leave as “the hardest decision of my life” and commented that they “felt terrible letting the kids down.” Seven of the participants became visibly or audibly emotionally upset when speaking about their decision to leave. Tamara explains:

I was broken hearted to be leaving the kids. I cried like a baby, like a hysterical cry. But at the same time I was angry because I felt like had the administrator done a better job or if the right systems were in place then I wouldn't have felt as much of a need to leave so I was angry about it. But at the end of the day you know I was really sad about leaving the kids. I was happy to be going to a different population where you know maybe I could focus on teaching. But I felt bad for leaving those kids.

When asked what they enjoyed about working in Title 1, every single teacher responded immediately and sincerely with “the kids.” Through their stories, all of the teachers consistently describe the deep connections and commitments they had to their students and to the families in the Title 1 schools. All of the teachers also describe how “needed” they felt while working in Title 1 schools and that their relationships in those schools was more like “family.” Five teachers mentioned that they were concerned they would not feel “needed” by students in their new non-Title 1 positions, but later acknowledged that yes they were needed in their new schools just in different ways.

It was a good decision. Despite the connections they describe with their Title 1 students and their remorse for leaving their Title 1 position, ten out of the twelve teachers reported that they are happier teaching in their new non-Title 1 buildings. The two teachers who claimed they were not happier in their new non-Title 1 building explained that they both would like to go back to teach in a Title 1 building, but that it would have to be after their children grow up so their families would not suffer from the extra hours they would need to devote to their job. Jolie’s sentiments summarize the group findings by explaining:

I am now much happier as a teacher. I feel like I can do bigger and better things with these students because their levels are higher. They're more engaged. Their families are more engaged. I will say that teaching here doesn't come without its own issues. But overall, it is 100 percent less stress. I sleep better. I don't worry that they're not going to get fed. I don't worry that you know somebody's going to get harshly punished for something. I just don't have that stress. And as far as teaching, I don't feel like I have to put on a three ring circus every day and that we can actually get down to instruction and learn, and I have so much more time to teach because I don't have 10 kids leaving my class to go to ELL every day. This job feels totally different.

Addison summarizes feeling guilty about the differences in her new teaching position by stating:

Yeah I always feel like I can't really tell my colleagues that still work in Title 1 what my job is like now. I can't tell them what fun things were doing because I know how hard they are working just to do the simplest lessons and I can't say I'm leaving at 4:00 every day because I know they aren't. I know they are still struggling and fighting every day for their students.

Research Question #3: What could Motivate Teachers to Stay in Title 1

The next section will provide SPS leaders' with suggestions as well as answer the final research question which states,

3. *How do teachers describe incentives or motivations that might have encouraged them to remain in their original Title 1 School?*

Behavior supports. Teachers described how additional resources and structural changes in the way behavioral supports are provided might have reduced their desire to migrate.

Teachers state that they are given students with many behavioral and emotional challenges that they do not feel they have adequate training to cope with or in-school supports to address those challenges. They mention that training on various mental health topics such as: emotional regulation, social emotional learning, deescalating behavioral outbursts, and trauma informed practices would be beneficial. Ten of the teachers state that having more school counselors, social workers, and mental health specialists in Title 1 buildings would help lessen the strain and stress they felt and would have helped retain them in their previous teaching position. Teachers

also describe needing more support and training when making DCF calls and when evacuating their classroom due to unsafe behaviors. They report that the crisis teams within their buildings are not always available to help when they are needed for classroom evacuations which creates an unsafe environment. When safety concerns arise, and teachers feel the structures and supports around them are failing they worry about liability issues that could cause them to lose their teaching license. Teachers request that a building administrator be available during school hours for such events. Kari explains:

I feel like our administrators are pulled so much for district meetings. There were times I really felt like I needed help from administration and there was no one there. If we could even have two administrators in Title 1 buildings, a principal and assistant principal that would really help with crisis team support or situations where parents are getting into an altercation which happens. I felt like I got pulled into a lot of situations I wasn't prepared for because there wasn't an administrator in the building, and so the counselor and I were trying to handle the situation. I don't know that we were exactly trained for that. I did eventually get the CPI training, but those situations made me extremely uncomfortable and not want to come to work.

Ultimately, the structure of the behavioral supports within the crisis teams are reportedly lacking consistency, reliability, and fidelity. A more consistent and reliable plan would help alleviate stress around extreme student behaviors which is one of the top three reasons teachers reported they left their Title 1 school in SPS.

Leadership. Teachers want quality leadership. Cami describes the kind of leader she wants in Title 1:

In Title 1 you need a leader who is willing to back up their teachers and stand up for kids. The administrator needs to always do their best for the child, even if it's not technically following the norm or what everyone else is doing. It's more about what's best for the child. For instance, we at our Title 1 school worked with the district Reading Coordinator and we did not do Animated Alphabet. We did something called the phonics dance because we found it more effective for our Title 1 kids. And so that's what we did in first and second grade and she approved it. She researched the program and backed us. We were all in it together.

Teachers also express a desire to have a leader who is ethical, has a strong work ethic, high

standards, and superior organizational and communication skills. A majority of the teachers who left Title 1, report that their buildings were “lacking leadership.” Teachers acknowledge that their school principals were unable to provide the resources and supports that they needed and that the principals themselves struggled with many of the same issues the teachers struggled with. Kaitlin explains:

When we have a serious behavior issue and we go to our principal for help it is so frustrating when they don't give you a straight answer. Trust me, I have tried everything before I go to my principal. Most of the time my principal is too busy to help me anyway, and when I do get to see her and she ultimately blows me off. It feels awful. I need help. I need someone to do something. I can't fix it myself. This is above my training and I am drowning by myself. It just feels like administration has all these expectations, but when you are honest and say you need help, they don't have any real answers, they don't respond to email, and they don't follow through on what they say they will do.

The majority of SPS teachers express that they did not feel supported or understood by their principals. They believe that leadership in Title 1 schools is essential with the amount of hard work, collaboration, and stress management that is required. Teachers express a need for leaders to inspire teacher groups toward a common goal, be attentive and willing to listen and a problem solver who takes input for consideration. Teachers report that they want their principal to show appreciation, and possess skill in recruiting quality teachers and retaining good teachers to combat turnover. They would like to work for leaders who have: experience in Title 1 buildings, high standards, a hands-on approach, and are willing to make difficult decisions and have difficult conversations to make change for kids.

Pull-out programming change. Teachers want pull-out programming systemic change. They mention that a push-in model would be more beneficial than the pull-out model. A push-in model consists of specialized support staff pushing into the general education classroom to

support targeted students around the classroom curriculum, rather than pulling those students out into a separate setting for a different lesson. They specifically mention that the system that was created to help support English Language Learners is not perceived to be beneficial, but is detrimental to all students. Teachers elaborate that ELL should follow and support grade level standards so that skill work can transfer across disciplines with an integrated curriculum. They do not believe that ELL students should miss social studies or science instruction, and they believe that pull-outs should be restructured to not have the unintended consequence of segmenting the lesson planning of the classroom teacher.

More time for collaboration. Teachers requested additional time for collaboration and PLCs in Title 1 buildings because they feel they spend more time intricately collaborating with colleagues around student needs and that they make more data driven decisions around student interventions and grouping. They report that a common collaboration time between ELL, SPED and reading and math specialist teachers and classroom teachers would be worthwhile to plan coherent instruction and that collaboration time between mental health specialists and teachers would be worthwhile to help provide resources for their students' social emotional needs.

Equity. Teachers believe that a balancing of funds across Title and non-Title 1 schools would be more ethical and level the playing field for Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools. They would like to see more money put into the older buildings to be more equitable regarding updates as well as programming and opportunities. Teachers mention a need for equity rather than equality when describing funding allocation to different schools.

Community partnerships. Ten of the twelve teachers interviewed mentioned a need for more of a community partnership with Title 1 buildings. The teachers mention that many of the

non-Title 1 schools within SPS have a surplus of funds and that many community service organizations within Suburbia are actively volunteering and supplying needs. Several teachers mentioned partnering Title 1 schools with non-Title 1 schools to raise PTO funds together for more equity across the district. It was suggested that community organizations like Mission Southside come in and help provide supplies and snacks or even after-school clubs for kids.

Bethany explains in detail:

If a kid was hungry I felt like it was my job to get them a granola bar. I wish I had some options. I wish somebody would adopt a classroom for a week and say hey we're going to be here to provide what you need for your students this week and maybe one week they could help provide gloves and hats and another week it could be snacks for kids. Anything and everything helps. It would be nice to have resources we could reach out to like that.

Ultimately, the teachers reportedly feel that there are resources within the community that can be sourced into the Title 1 schools to better help provide for some of the diverse needs of the students which could relieve some of the burden and stress the teacher feels to provide those items independently.

Money. When asked what could have kept the teacher in their Title 1 position, not one of the teachers mentioned more money. When asked if more money could have been a factor that retained them in their Title 1 position, the majority of teacher said “it would help.” A majority of the teachers explained that more money would not have kept them in their Title 1 position permanently, but it would have kept them working there longer. The teachers’ reasoned that having financial reimbursement for their extra time and effort in Title 1 would make their job more competitive. Otherwise they justify that they can move into a job that makes the same amount of money but requires less time and less stress in the same district. Teachers also mentioned that being provided stipends for the extra time spent working in Title 1 schools after hours on interventions would also make the workload in Title 1 seem a little “more fair.” When

asked if they thought Title 1 teachers across the district deserve to be paid more, every single teacher responded yes, even though none of them were currently working in Title 1 positions.

Personalize professional development. In addition, teachers point to professional development when talking about opportunities for the district to improve the experience of the Title 1 teacher. Kaitlin describes her experience during SPS professional development:

I'm sitting there thinking, I can't do this with my children because half of them don't speak English or they still aren't phonetically where they need to be. This is more for schools who have kids on grade level. So you know, I think Suburban Public Schools is so diverse and so big, it's to the point the district need to separate out and personalize professional development opportunities for Title 1 schools and non-Title 1 schools.

Teachers share their opinion that professional learning opportunities should be personalized to their needs within the Title 1 setting regarding areas of instructional focus on English Language Learners and below level interventions as well as behavioral social emotional needs. They report that the one-size-fits-all approach to professional development within the district does not meet their needs as a Title 1 teachers and makes them feel like the district “doesn’t understand” or is unaware or insensitive to the diverse needs of Title 1 schools.

Summary of Chapter Four Findings

The findings of this study were synthesized from descriptive analysis and the qualitative interview data of purposefully selected teachers who requested transfers and migrated from Title 1 to non-Title 1 schools within SPS. This data was analyzed to form themes and patterns that could contribute to the understanding of teacher intra-district migration. The findings answered each of the three research questions and began by describing what teacher perceived to be differences between Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools before they transferred, and then how their real life experience compared once they made the move.

In summary, all twelve of the teachers perceived that workload and stress was greater in Title 1 schools and nine of the twelve found that to be true after they taught in both settings. Three of the teachers concluded that the work was indeed more stressful in Title 1 schools, but that there wasn't necessarily more work. Teachers report that the high level of need in Title 1 schools presents the chance for teachers to make a difference and help their students in ways that aren't typically present in non-Title 1 buildings. None of the teachers report thinking about how their instructional focus might shift when changing buildings, but the majority of teachers acknowledged that their instructional focus shifted from teaching below grade level, lower level Bloom's Taxonomy skills to teaching above grade level, higher order thinking skills. Teachers mentioned that the gains made in Title 1 buildings within the below grade level instruction were often small and overlooked but personally rewarding compared to the gains and success non-Title 1 students experience. Eight of the twelve teachers believed that transferring to a non-Title 1 school would relieve the scheduling conflicts they faced in Title 1 schools regarding pull-out programming and all twelve teachers' report that moving to non-Title did give them more scheduling autonomy. Six out of twelve of the teachers mentioned that they felt like they lacked support in the non-Title 1 schools because they no longer had specialists in the building to consult regarding student needs in their classroom. Seven out of the twelve teachers mentioned that having specialists in the building in Title 1 schools fostered closer relationships between staff members due to the amount of collaboration that was required of them on a daily basis. All twelve teachers predicted that leaving Title 1 schools and transferring into non-Title 1 schools would increase parental involvement. They did not however predict how much time it would take to respond to parental communications nor did they consider the component of parent criticism and over involvement. Teachers report in Title 1 they had very little parent

involvement, but the interactions they did have with parents did not involve criticism or the questioning of the teacher's professional judgement. Teachers were surprised by what they perceived to be lack of equity among building work conditions in Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools within the district. They acknowledge building budgets vary greatly due to PTO fundraising and that the disparity in funds impacts the experience of the student in an unjust way. Teachers point to the school district to allocate funds to promote equity across school buildings. Teachers believed that student misbehavior would be less in non-Title 1 but were surprised to see some of the same extreme behaviors occurring in non-Title 1 schools. Half of the teachers reported that extreme behaviors happen less often in non-Title 1 schools and half of the teachers report that extreme behaviors persist everywhere. All of the teachers desire more behavioral supports, resources and structures.

The second research question asked why teachers left Title 1 schools. Seven categories emerged from the interview data that explained teachers' decision to migrate (1) inability to meet the overwhelming need of students/stress, (2) extra work, (3) unintended consequences of pull out programs, (4) student behaviors, (5) turnover, (6) lack of equity, (7) leadership. The top four most cited reasons that teachers left Title 1 in order of significance are because of the overwhelming need and amplified stress, lacking leadership, ineffective supports and lacking resources regarding extreme student behaviors, and unintended consequences of the pull-out programming in SPS.

The third and final research question addressed what it would take for teachers to have stayed in their previous Title 1 positions and teachers described situations where behavioral supports are consistent and effective, there are more behavioral specialists in the building and more behavioral programs and resources, there is supportive and responsive leadership, pull-out

programs have been redesigned and restructured, ELL is a push-in model, there is more collaboration time around student needs, there are there monetary incentives for working in Title 1, there's equity in funding across school buildings, more community supports and partnerships, and district professional development opportunities personalized to the needs of Title 1 teachers specifically. These are the changes that teachers respond could have kept them in their Title 1 positions. All teachers describe a profound sadness for leaving their Title 1 students, but acknowledge that they are happy with their decision to leave the Title 1 building because of the relief in stress.

Chapter Five

Discussion and Implications

The purpose of this study was to examine the understudied population of teachers who migrate within district and explore influencing factors and teachers' beliefs and experiences around their decision to transfer from a Title 1 to a non-Title 1 school within the same district. The pervasive literature on teacher turnover focuses on the component of attrition, neglecting to account for migration which comprises 60 percent of teacher turnover (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008). Knowing more about intra-district migrators and their beliefs and decision making processes can help inform research as to why migrators are leaving Title 1 schools at greater rates than non-Title 1 schools. Previous research on teacher flight from low achieving, more diverse, low socio-economic student populations has been reported within the context and location of run down inner city rural areas (Boyd et al., 2005; Carroll et al., 2000; Hanushek et. al., 2004; Scafidi, Sjoquist, & Stinebrickner 2007). This study investigated teacher turnover within an highly awarded suburban school district in the Kansas City Metropolitan area where teacher turnover percentages mirror national averages, and Title 1 schools experience on average one-third more teacher turnover compared to more affluent non-Title 1 schools within the studied district. Ultimately, this study sought to inform policy makers and school administrators how to address the effects of increased turnover in the neediest, highest poverty schools within a largely affluent and highly regarded district. This study targets the gap in knowledge regarding teacher migration patterns away from Title 1 schools by asking and addressing the following three research questions:

- 1) What do teachers perceive to be similarities and differences between Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools?

- 2) How do teachers who transfer out of Title 1 and into non-Title 1 schools within the same district describe their motivations for transferring?
- 3) How do teachers describe incentives or motivations that might encourage them to remain in their original Title 1 School?

Chapter five discusses the results of the research and relates the findings to current literature on the subject. This chapter will provide conclusions, policy implications, limitations, and recommendations for future research on the topic of teacher intra-district migration within SPS.

Common Themes from Data

After synthesizing data from twelve interviews, the most commonly cited reason teachers left Title 1 schools in SPS was described as the overwhelming needs of students and stress. The second and following most frequently mentioned influencing factors were a lack of direction or support in leadership, student behavioral challenges, and pull-out program scheduling. After collecting the interview data and analyzing for themes, there are four primary findings from this research study:

1. Teachers in SPS did not leave Title 1 schools because of the students, they left because of the ineffective systems and lack of resources within the school.

Teachers in SPS did not leave Title 1 schools because of the students. This finding informs previous studies whom support the idea that teachers move toward and prefer students who are higher achieving, less diverse, and wealthier (Boyd et al, 2005; Carroll et al., 2000; Scafidi et al., 2007). While it is true that SPS teachers did move towards higher achieving, less diverse, and wealthier students; that is not the whole story. Teachers clearly and emphatically stated that they did not leave because of the students themselves. In fact, when given the opportunity to share their insight during our interviews, every teacher sincerely and adamantly shared that the best

thing about teaching in Title 1 was the students and the families they served. These sentiments are supported by research that finds teachers enter Title 1 schools because of their “humanistic commitment” to teaching in underserved communities (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton, & Freitas, 2010, p. 71; Cochran-Smith et al., 2003; Charner-Laird, Johnson, Kraft, Ng, Paypay, & Reinhorn, 2013). When asked about their decision to depart the Title 1 schools, every single teacher interviewed displayed strong emotions. Their voices cracked, they looked down, and the majority teared up. They describe the decision to leave as “the hardest decision I’ve ever made” and they express deep remorse for “leaving the students they love” and “letting the kids down” who “need them the most”.

So if teachers did not leave because of the students themselves, why did they leave? This study supports Richard Ingersoll’s (2001) application of organizational theory to the problem of teacher turnover by explaining, “Teachers are leaving the working conditions within the organizations that highly correlate with student body characteristics, not solely because of the student characteristics themselves” (Allensworth et al., 2009; Horgn, 2009; Johnson, Kraft & Papay, 2012). Moreover, additional research suggests that when teachers leave, it is because of the working conditions in the schools that impede their ability to teach successfully (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). Over and over within each interview, SPS teachers describe working conditions in their Title 1 schools where programming and structures coupled with a lack of resources are inhibiting their ability to meet the overwhelming need of their students. Johnson et al.’s 2012 study supports this finding by stating, “Teachers who leave high-poverty, high minority schools reject the dysfunctional context in which they work, rather than the students they teach” (p. 4). In addition, Helen Ladd’s (2011) research reports that teachers’ perceptions about their working conditions are highly predictive of their intention to leave schools, even

when controlling for student race and socioeconomic status. Therefore, organizational programs, supports, and resources could be restructured and placed in Title 1 schools to better meet student needs, and teachers would then be more likely to stay with the students they love. Teachers are leaving the schools as organizations who are failing to support them, not the students.

2. Teachers felt more stress in Title 1 schools and left their Title 1 buildings to experience less stress.

The most commonly mentioned reason teachers left Title 1 was the “overwhelming need and stress” in Title 1 schools. The current reality is that many students’ are coming to Title 1 schools without their basic needs being met, and research informs us those needs must be met before learning can take place (Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need, 1943). Teachers are being charged with immense challenges in the Title 1 schools. They must meet a classroom of poverty stricken students’ basic needs while simultaneously improving student performance on standardized tests in spite of lacking resources and ineffective supports. Teachers are looking to leadership for support as the organization and structures around them fail to meet and support student needs. This situation creates stress for teachers. Lazarus and Folkman’s (1984) transactional model of stress informs us that stress is not solely the demands placed on a person, but rather when the person evaluates that they do not have enough resources to meet the demands. When Title 1 teachers do not perceive they have enough resources and supports to meet their students’ needs, they become stressed. Many Title 1 teachers dedicate themselves to the tireless work of teaching underserved populations, which is psychologically draining for long periods of time. This situation leads to burnout and turnover (Freudenberger & Richelson, 1980). Freudenberger and Richelson (1980) asserts, “Sufferers of burnout are not underachievers nor are they carefree people with modest aspirations. Sufferers from burnout are charismatic, dynamic, goal-oriented,

and idealistic professionals” (p. 12). Ultimately, hardworking passionate teachers are leaving Title 1 schools because they perceive they do not have enough resources to be successful. They leave the school to reduce stress and potentially prevent or overcome burnout.

3. Teachers left because of the lack of mental health resources, and inconsistency and ineffectiveness of behavioral supports and structures currently in place.

Teachers didn’t leave Title 1 because of the student behaviors themselves, but left instead because of the lack of mental health resources, and inconsistency and ineffectiveness of the behavioral supports and structures currently in place. SPS Teachers report that the current behavioral supports are not effective because of a lack in resources and the school’s inability to be consistent and implement the supports with fidelity. Research informs us that teachers leave schools where a lack of student discipline impedes their ability to teach (Allensworth et al., 2009; Johnson et al., 2005; Ladd, 2011). This is especially true in high-poverty schools (Allensworth et al., 2009; Ingersoll 2003). SPS teachers report that when they have a situation where a student is being unsafe, the school crisis team may or may not have a protocol in place. If there is a protocol in place, it would inform the teacher to first contact someone on the crisis team list. Teachers describe situations where they call for support on the crisis team without an answer and that when they try to communicate with their principal for help, the principal is sometimes out of the building, and will not respond to email due to a concern of violating Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations. Teachers describe a reality where one counselor per building is overstretched, and social workers as well as school psychologists share as many as three buildings in the district. Therefore the mental health specialists in the district have overloaded caseloads, and they are not able to be in a particular building more than 1 to 2 days a week. The lack in mental health resources and behavioral specialists creates a situation

where teachers feel abandoned. Research informs us that teachers want to be in schools that have school-wide norms for behavior and consistent discipline policies (Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Charner-Laird et al., 2013).

The second highest cited reason teachers left Title 1 within this study is described as a “lack in leadership.” In a situation where a student is not being safe, teachers are legally responsible to keep that student as well as the rest of the class safe. Teachers look to leadership to help prevent and handle these highly stressful situations where teachers could be held legally at fault and lose their teaching license indefinitely if someone gets hurt. Teachers are more likely to remain at schools that provide safe and supportive environments for students (Allensworth et al, 2009). When leadership is absent or unable to provide what the teacher deems as appropriate resources or structures to support the safety of their students, the teacher feels that leadership has failed them. Allensworth et al. conducted a study in 2009 that found that principal leadership is a “strong significant predictor of teacher retention” and that “positive, trusting, working relationships” are the most influential organizational factor regarding whether teachers leave or stay (p. 25-26). Helen Ladd (2011) reports that the dominant factor predicting school turnover is teachers’ perception of school leadership. While it is the responsibility of the school principal to ensure a safe learning environment to its students and teachers, the issue of behavior management and mental health resource allocation is organizational in nature and may not be solved by the principal at the building level alone. This situation creates a crack in the relationship of the building leader and teacher that may develop into distrust and dysfunction. Principals are being pulled out of the building for district meetings, and they are struggling to solve the issue of student behavior with limited resources. It is important to acknowledge that as

with teachers, many aspects of the working environment impact principal retention as well (Loeb et al., 2010).

4. The pull-out programs' scheduling requirements in Title 1 schools, where the sole purpose of the pull-out programs is to target and help the lowest achieving students, are an important and frequently cited consideration when teachers choose to leave.

The fourth finding within this study is that the pull-out programs in SPS's Title 1 schools designed to target and help the lowest achieving students are part of the reason teachers are choosing to leave. Teachers are leaving Title 1 schools because the programs in Title 1 schools have the unintended consequence of negatively impacting the scheduling autonomy of their day. Teachers' report that pull-out programs in their Title 1 buildings create scheduling conflicts that segment their instructional time into short chunks, inhibit the effectiveness of their lessons, and prevent ELL student populations from receiving science and social studies instruction. In addition, teachers are being asked to not teach new material during times when pull-outs occur which impedes their ability to do their job and provides ethical challenges. ELL programming within the district was repetitively mentioned to be "ineffective." Concerns were voiced over the ELL program in SPS specifically regarding the exceptionally high class sizes, unrelated instructional activities, and disjointed curricular objectives. Teachers describe the ethical dilemma of ELL students missing all science and social studies instruction while experiencing disconnected lessons from different adults in different rooms throughout short segments of instruction throughout the day. They describe this as "jarring" and "ineffective practice." Teachers cite pull-out programs as the third most often mentioned reason why they left Title 1. They express the belief that pull-out programs negatively impacted their ability to increase student performance.

Collectively, these four conclusions contribute to the understanding of intra-district teacher migration in SPS through the perceptions and opinions expressed by teachers who made the choice to transfer within the district. The goal of this qualitative study was to explore and understand the perceptions, beliefs, motivating factors, and experiences of teachers who left Title 1 elementary schools and transferred into non-Title 1 elementary schools within SPS. In addition, this study sought to identify what factors or changes could be made to retain teachers in Title 1 schools in SPS, and in doing so, contribute to the greater conversation regarding teacher turnover and retention. Merriam (2009) elaborates on this process by stating, “Every study, every case, every situation lies in the particular; that is, what we learn in a particular situation we can transfer or generalize to similar situations subsequently encountered (p. 225).

Limitations

This study has several acknowledged limitations. It would have been ideal to administer qualitative interviews at the time teachers requested a transfer, and then again a year or two after they experienced teaching in their new school. The method of interviewing teachers several years after they transferred out of Title 1 schools leaves room for error. As time lapses, there is more potential for error from participants’ selective memory, incorrect transmission of facts, or exaggeration.

A second limitation is that the qualitative interviews used within this study reflect the participant’s perception at one point in time. The participant could be having a bad day and therefore they could report their experiences through a negative lens at that point in time. Merriam (2009) explains the point in time limitation by discussing, “Several factors may influence an informant’s responses, factors that may be difficult for the researcher to discern. The informant’s health, mood at the time of the interview, and so on may affect the quality of

data obtained, and might an informant's ulterior motives for participating in the project" (page 114).

Policy Considerations

Gordon and Reber (2015) report that only 6 percent of the districts they investigated within their qualitative study were operating school wide pull-out programs, and found that "state or district accounting rules and the fear of potential audit exceptions were major barriers to consolidation of funding" (p. 142). In other words, districts were not reportedly using their fiscal resources to best meet their students' needs due to fear and confusion around Title 1 fiscal regulation compliance. It is recommended that policy makers and administration within SPS clarify school-wide options within Title 1 funding, and look at the reallocation of funds and structures to best support the needs of their students and teachers specifically within their pull-out programs. Potentially using a push-in model or using Title 1 funds legally for other programs or push-in resources could potentially alleviate the unintended consequences of the pull-out programs and help to retain teachers in Title 1 schools. Allowing all students the opportunity to experience science and social studies instruction is also a policy decision that is ethical and necessary.

Policy considerations also include restructuring the teams and protocol around those who help with behavior issues within schools. Teachers report no one is available when they have safety concerns and call for help. Reallocating resources to provide more mental health specialists on site or rescheduling principals' meetings to keep them in the school building during the school day has the potential to reduce teacher stress around unsafe behaviors and potentially retain teachers. The district could allocate more funds to high-poverty schools to hire

additional support staff, or an assistant principal who could focus solely on behavioral needs, to give the principal more opportunity to focus on instruction, students, and parents.

Another area of policy consideration is within the allocation of funds across the school district to promote equity. Taking into consideration that Title 1 schools are reportedly not experiencing similar field trips, building conditions, or resources compared to non-Title 1 schools; the district has an ethical obligation to level the playing field. Partnering up Title 1 and non-Title 1 schools' by way of combined PTO fundraisers such as school carnivals or walk-a-thons could help the district promote equity. It is also worth mentioning that while state and local monetary resources might be limited, community resources within the suburban community studied are not. Reaching out to businesses and organizations within the community to identify who would be willing to provide resources to the neediest schools within the district is an area of consideration. Utilizing the supportive community by fostering relationships with community-based organizations, local colleges, healthcare agencies, extracurricular programs, or non-profit organizations would provide teachers in Title 1 schools with more resources and help them feel supported.

Teachers who left Title 1 schools frequently described dissatisfaction with their building leadership as well as dissatisfaction with organizational structures that district leaders' impact. In an effort for principals to be present and visible in times of teacher need, the district should consider not pulling principals out of their building during school hours for district meetings. This is a structural change district leaders could make that could have a positive impact on teacher perception of support. On a building-level, improving the quality of principals in Title 1 schools within the district could impact the retention of teachers. When hiring and assigning principals, the district might consider the qualities that teachers in high-poverty schools say they

seek: effective management, fair and encouraging leadership, instructional support, and inclusive decision making (Simon & Johnson, 2015). District officials would be wise to select the most effective principals to lead Title 1 buildings, rather than novice principals. Principal preparation program and professional development programs designed to focus on the skills school leaders will need to succeed in Title 1 would be worthwhile.

The last policy implication revolves around professional development (PD) in SPS. Teachers report that SPS professional development is not always beneficial to them as Title 1 teachers. Instead, future policy could focus on providing Title 1 teachers with additional options that are personalized to their needs within professional development days. Title 1 teachers request PD that provides instructional interventions and mental health training. PD training opportunities could help alleviate teachers' stress. Title 1 teachers also work in highly collaborative environments with diverse student needs. Another PD opportunity could be to give Title 1 teachers the option of additional Planned Learning Communities (PLC) time. Teachers and specialists could come together and problem solve around behavioral, social-emotional, and instructional needs of students. This would be worthwhile time spent to focus collective work around a common goal. These PLCs could be given to Title 1 teachers as part of a professional development option where they are given a task and then asked to work within their teams around the task.

Future Research

Principals have a large impact in high poverty schools. In 2011, Grissom analyzed Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) / Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS) data and found that teachers working in high poverty schools led by an effective principal are generally more satisfied than teachers in non-disadvantaged schools working under an equally effective principal

(p. 2552). Ultimately, Grissom concluded that an effective principal “completely offsets” teacher turnover in disadvantaged schools (p. 2576). Therefore, principals are significant, and have the potential to make a greater impact in high poverty schools, but what kind of supports do principals need to be retained?

Title 1 principal turnover rates mirror those of Title 1 teachers, and in fact, principals in high poverty settings also tend to leave the profession or transfer to schools with more favorable working conditions and fewer disadvantaged students (Loeb et al., 2010). Considering the impact principals have on schools, and especially Title 1 schools, more research is needed to understand why principals are leaving and what can be done to retain them in Title 1 schools. Too often principals have the enormous burden and singular responsibility of school success. Policy makers should consider ways to distribute leadership and responsibilities across district and staff so that principals are not fully accountable for improving struggling schools (Bryk et al., 2010). Future research is needed to identify organizational structures that best serve leaders of Title 1 schools in order to distribute leadership, retain principals, and promote their success. I would personally like to see a future qualitative study done within SPS that targets principals who have migrated out of Title 1 schools to identify their reasons for leaving and inquiry about what supports and structures they would need to retain them in their previous Title 1 principalship.

An area of future research consists within Title 1 pull-out programming. The current state of pull-out programs are under fire and deemed ineffective by teachers. Research needs to investigate the impact of the pull-out structure, content cohesiveness and transfer across grade-level curricular standards, and student performance outcomes. This research is needed to inform current practice and to potentially guide future improvements to Title 1 programs.

Behavior management is a significant factor in teacher stress and burnout. While this is reflected in literature, relatively few studies have addressed this challenge through professional development (Dicke, Elling, Leutner, & Schmeck, 2015). This study has implications for additional research in behavior management support systems as teachers report failed systems that lack effectiveness, consistency, follow-through, and fidelity. Teachers seek systems where students meet behavioral goals and teachers feel supported with enough resources or mental health support to experience less stress within the classroom. Research that provides effective and established behavior management programs, or identifies how to restructure the limited supports Title 1 school currently possess, or identifies how funding can be reallocated to provide more mental health supports would be paramount in the reduction of stress, burnout, and departure of teachers in Title 1 settings.

Additional research is suggested in the area of reducing teacher stress specifically in high poverty schools. Gaining a greater understanding of what causes stress, the impact of stress, and how stress can be combatted can help inform schools and solidify the importance of making teachers' mental health and well-being a priority. Future research that pinpoints specific programs targeted at successfully reducing teacher stress would be beneficial. Desrumaux et al. (2015) suggest providing more resources to teachers such as, "compensated leadership opportunities, accessibility of administration, enforcement of school rules, and material support for classroom supplies". Additional research could also bring an awareness to educational leaders on how to better provide supports in stress management which would aid in the retention of teachers in Title 1 settings. Perceptions that work demands outweigh available resources for coping lead to a stress response in teachers, which includes negative emotions and, in the long run, burnout symptoms and health problems. Stress management systems are needed to prevent

the cycle of stress, burnout, and attrition. Research that targets how to best provide stress management to not only teachers in Title 1 settings, but also principals is imperative.

Desrumaux et al. (2015) underscore that work environment and climate play a “critical role in matters of occupational health” (p. 186). More is needed to truly understand teachers’ preferences regarding work conditions in order to retain teachers in high poverty schools. Much research within school work conditions draws upon large, quantitative, survey-based datasets. Surveys rely on multiple choice formats with limited sets of choices and do not yield descriptive or complex responses. Qualitative research is needed to inform the existing survey research on work conditions. For example, if teachers report on a survey instrument that they stay in Title 1 because of “supportive colleagues”. Qualitative interview techniques could identify specifically what teachers perceive to be “supportive”. This research could help schools foster specific work condition improvements within Title 1 settings that pinpoint and provide for teachers’ needs and increase retention rates.

SPS could also make the recommended organizational changes to their school district to identify if teacher migration patterns decrease to identify their effectiveness in retaining Title 1 teachers.

Appendices

Appendix A IRB Approval



APPROVAL OF PROTOCOL

April 24, 2018

Kelly Northup
knorthup@ku.edu

Dear Kelly Northup:

On 4/24/2018, the IRB reviewed the following submission:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Type of Review: | Initial Study |
| Title of Study: | Teacher Intra-district Migration out of Title 1 Schools |
| Investigator: | Kelly Northup |
| IRB ID: | STUDY00142348 |
| Funding: | None |
| Grant ID: | None |
| Documents Reviewed: | • 20180416_Introduction email_TD.docx, • KU Human Research Protocol 8-17-1 (2).pdf, • Signed Consent Form |

The IRB approved the study on 4/24/2018.

1. Notify HRPP about any new investigators not named in original application. Note that new investigators must take the online tutorial at https://rgs.drupal.ku.edu/human_subjects_compliance_training.
2. Any injury to a subject because of the research procedure must be reported immediately.
3. When signed consent documents are required, the primary investigator must retain the signed consent documents for at least three years past completion of the research activity.

Continuing review is not required for this project, however you are required to report any significant changes to the protocol prior to altering the project.

Please note university data security and handling requirements for your project:
<https://documents.ku.edu/policies/IT/DataClassificationandHandlingProceduresGuide.htm>

You must use the final, watermarked version of the consent form, available under the "Documents" tab in eCompliance.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Isley, MS, CIP
IRB Administrator, KU Lawrence Campus

Appendix B SPS Approval Letter



May 4th, 2018

Dear Kelly:

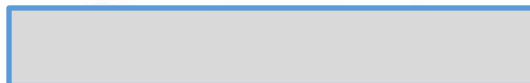
I am pleased to inform you that your request to do research in the [redacted] School District has been **approved**. We do have a copy of your application, a copy of your IRB from KU, and your approved questions. As it concerns your research, as you reach out to teachers who have formerly had an ELL focus, would you please send me those names? Additionally, please have a positive focus on your questioning, per our conversation.

In any of your work, please do not make any reference to the [redacted] or any specific school— please reference [redacted] as a “large suburban district in the mid-west” or a school as a “suburban school in the state of Kansas”— or some other reference name of your choice, but do not use the [redacted] or any school names. Additionally, please do not use any student or staff identifying information.

Your study of the reasons for teachers to transition from an ELL focus to general education is of interest to the district, so when your research is completed, we would love to see your results.

Good luck with your research, Kelly!

Sincerely,



Appendix C
Introduction Email to Potential Interview Participants

Dear (insert name),

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Kansas studying Educational Leadership and Policy Studies working on my dissertation and I would like to invite you to participate in my research. My dissertation topic is a study teacher migration patterns within Suburban Public Schools, where I previously worked for ten years as a Title 1 elementary school teacher.

My interviews will focus upon teachers' decision-making process for those who transferred out of Title 1 schools and moved into non-Title 1 schools within the Suburban Public School district. As part of my study, I would like to schedule interviews with ten teachers to better understand the reasons and thought processes of those who have worked in both Title 1 and non-Title 1 settings. Would you be willing to participate in a brief 20-30 minute interview in person, via Zoom, or over the phone? I would happily schedule the interview at a date and time that is convenient to your schedule.

If you choose not to participate in an interview, you may respond to this email to knorthup@bluevalleyk12.org and I will remove your name from the distribution list.

Thank you in advance for giving of your time to assist in this research venture. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at knorthup@bluevalleyk12.org. You may also contact my dissertation co-chair, Dr. Thomas DeLuca at tadeluca@ku.edu, or the Human Research Protection Program at the University of Kansas, irb@ku.edu.

Attached to this email is additional Human Subjects information from the University of Kansas Internal Review Board Department.

Regards,

Kelly Northup

Ed.D Candidate, Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
University of Kansas

Appendix D
Adult Informed Consent Statement

Teacher Intra-district Migration out of Title 1 Schools

The Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at the University of Kansas supports the practice of protection for human subjects participating in research. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You may refuse to sign this form and not participate in this study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time. If you do withdraw from this study, it will not affect your relationship with this unit, the services it may provide to you, or the University of Kansas.

This study focuses its attention on the understudied population of teachers who migrate from Title I schools within a district. Data will be collected through interviews to discern why they moved and what more could have been done to retain them in their previous Title 1 schools. Ultimately, this study seeks to inform policy makers and school administrators how to address the effects of increased turnover in the neediest, highest poverty schools within a largely affluent and highly regarded district.

We are conducting this study to better understand intra-district migration patterns and will entail your participation in an interview. Your participation is expected to take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The content of the interview questions should cause no more discomfort than you would experience in your everyday life. There are no risks anticipated within this study. Participants will not be compensated to participate in this study.

Although participation may not benefit you directly, we believe that the information obtained from this study will help us gain a better understanding of why teachers migrate away from Title 1 schools and into non-Title 1 schools and might give insight on how to retain teachers in their previous Title 1 positions. Your participation is solicited, although strictly voluntary. Your name will not be associated with any publication or presentation with the information collected about you or with the research findings from this study. Instead, I will use a study number or pseudonym rather than your name. Your identifiable information will not be shared unless (a) it is required by law or university policy, or (b) you give written permission.

This interview will be audio recorded, though recording is not required to participate. You may stop talking at any time. Interviews will take place in person, via Zoom over the Internet, or over the phone. It is possible, however, with internet communications, that through intent or accident someone other than the intended recipient may see your response if recorded via Zoom. The recordings will be transcribed by me. Only my faculty advisor and I will have access to the recordings, which will be stored on the student researcher's computer and destroyed after 6 months.

Permission granted on this date to use and disclose your information remains in effect indefinitely. By signing this form you give permission for the use and disclosure of your information for purposes of this study at any time in the future.

You may withdraw your consent to participate in this study at any time. You also have the right to cancel your permission to use and disclose further information collected about you, in writing, at any time, by sending your written request to Kelly Northup (contact information below).

If you cancel permission to use your information, the researcher will stop collecting additional information about you. However, the research team may use and disclose information that was gathered before they received your cancellation, as described above.

Questions about procedures should be directed to the researcher(s) listed at the end of this consent form.

I have read this Consent and Authorization form. I have had the opportunity to ask, and I have received answers to, any questions I had regarding the study. I understand that if I have any additional questions about my rights as a research participant, I may call (785) 864-7429 or (785) 864-7385, write the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP), University of Kansas, 2385 Irving Hill Road, Lawrence, Kansas 66045-7568, or email irb@ku.edu.

I agree to take part in this study as a research participant. By my signature I affirm that I am at least 18 years old and that I have received a copy of this Consent and Authorization form.

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------|
| _____ | _____ |
| Type/Print Participant's Name | Date |
| _____ | |
| Participant's Signature | |

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Appendix E

Research Questions

Interview Protocol Primary “Trunk” Questions: Open Ended

1. Tell me a little bit about you and your career path coming out of college to where you are today.
(Building Rapport)
2. What are things you enjoyed about working in a Title 1 school? (RQ2)
3. Can you tell me about challenges you faced while working in a Title 1 school? (RQ2)
4. How does working in a Title 1 building differ from what you do today? (RQ1)
 - Leadership
 - Support
 - Job responsibilities
 - Student behavior
 - Work Conditions
5. Talk to me about what influenced your decision to move schools. (RQ2)
 - Personally
 - Professionally
6. How did you feel before you moved schools?
7. Now that you moved, how are you feeling about the change you made? (RQ1)
8. If you could sit down with the superintendent of Suburban Public Schools for 10 minutes to create action steps of things the district could do to encourage teachers to stay in Title 1 buildings, what would the action steps be? (RQ3)
 - Leadership
 - Support
 - Job responsibilities
 - Student behavior
 - Work Conditions

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